

FIRST SITTING

Monday, 13 June 2005

1. Opening of the session

The sitting was opened at 15.00 with Mr Goris, President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

The PRESIDENT – In accordance with the provisions of Article III of the Charter of the Assembly and Rules 2 to 10 of the Rules of Procedure I declare open the 51st session of the Assembly of the Western European Union – the Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly.

2. Attendance register

The PRESIDENT – The names of those substitutes present at this sitting, which have been notified to the President, will be published with the list of representatives appended to the minutes of proceedings.

3. Examination of credentials

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the examination of credentials.

The names of newly nominated representatives and substitutes of the Assembly are published in Notice No. 1.

In accordance with paragraph 1 of Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure, their credentials have been ratified by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and formally communicated by the President of that Assembly.

I welcome our new colleagues to the Assembly and hope that they will enjoy our work.

4. Associate members, partners and observers

The PRESIDENT – I would like to welcome the affiliate members, associate members, affiliate associate members, permanent observers, affiliate permanent observers, affiliate associate partners, permanent guests and special guests. Changes to the delegations are listed in Notice No. 1. In accordance with Rule A.5 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure, I invite the Assembly to ratify the credentials of the new representatives and substitutes in each of these categories.

I would like to give a special welcome to the parliamentary observers from Azerbaijan and Belarus.

I would also like to welcome representatives of the of the EU Institute for Security Studies, the EU Satellite Centre, EU and NATO military staff, SHAPE and EUROFOR, as well as many representatives of defence ministries and the defence industry.

I would also like to welcome the chairmen of several national parliamentary committees on foreign affairs, defence and European affairs.

Following this afternoon's sitting, I will have the great pleasure of conferring the status of honorary member of the Assembly on three distinguished former colleagues, Mrs Manuela Aguiar, Mr Terry Davis and Mr Pedro Roseta. The presentation will take place just outside the Hemicycle at 18.45.

I also draw your attention to the Assembly's new book to mark our 50th anniversary, "The European Defence Debate 1955-2005".

5. Address by the President

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, only a few months ago, most of us had the impression that the steady advance of European policy was largely a matter of routine. Yet in the last few days, we have been overtaken by events, in just a few countries, that have plunged the European Union into a crisis that threatens to weaken the entire European edifice.

France and the Netherlands voting "no" to the Constitutional Treaty and the United Kingdom's decision to put its own procedure for ratifying that Treaty on hold, coupled with the German Government's decision to hold early elections next September have, overnight, created upheaval in the

political climate across Europe. The European Council, due to meet in Brussels in a few days, faces a massive challenge, as doubts about the future of the Constitutional Treaty and the chances of coming up with a suitable “road map” for an exit strategy from the present crisis threaten to spill over into other areas of European common policy not directly connected with the fate of the Constitutional Treaty.

The situation is such as to suggest that the Assembly hold an emergency debate during the present session to examine the implications. The political groups have, as you know, set the necessary wheels in motion and the Assembly will take its decision shortly.

Clearly, our Assembly is concerned about the areas that fall directly within its remit and in particular about the future of the European defence project. That concern is amply justified in a climate where the situation in various crisis flashpoints beyond Europe’s borders continues to be sensitive and volatile, indeed dangerous in some regions.

The killings in Darfur and peacekeeping difficulties in other parts of Africa immediately spring to mind. This worrying situation has led to the Assembly’s decision to hold a conference in Brussels, on 20 and 21 September 2005, on peacekeeping in Sub-Saharan Africa. Recent events in Uzbekistan and the precarious position in several parts of the Commonwealth of Independent States are further instances. There is still a very complex situation in the Broader Middle East which will be the focus of our discussions this week, on the basis of an extremely thoroughly researched report by our French colleague, Josette Durrieu. Iraq and Afghanistan are a long way from being pacified and stabilised.

The failure of the Review Conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to produce results is disturbing, given the growing number of countries determined to acquire nuclear weapons – Iran, North Korea and others besides.

There is therefore reason enough for maintaining constant all the conditions allowing Europe, and more particularly the European Union, with its “hard core” consisting of the ten modified Brussels Treaty signatory states, to pursue an effective common security policy based on the European Security Strategy, in order to promote international peace and security.

To achieve those objectives, it is also absolutely essential for all projects planned under the European Security and Defence Policy to go ahead. The question is therefore what impact the crisis sparked by the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by two of the European Union’s founder member states will have on the future of such projects and on the ESDP as a whole.

In the first place, I am convinced that it would not be at all helpful – indeed it could even be dangerous – to come to hasty conclusions and make recommendations to governments not supported by thorough examination. Therefore, in these difficult times, what should our task be? We must impress upon our governments that we want them to forge ahead with their European security policy objectives. Initially, this means implementing the various aspects of the European Security Strategy. I would remind you that the European Council drew up the strategy in December 2003 at the time when the first attempt to reach agreement on the Constitutional Treaty met with failure. Our Political Committee has devoted a very detailed report to that topic, prepared by our German colleague, Gerd Höfer. The draft recommendation in the report assumes especial importance in the new climate in which we find ourselves.

Secondly, we should make it abundantly clear that there is nothing to stop specific projects such as the civilian and military headline goals, establishing the battlegroups and the fight against terrorism, from going ahead as planned on the basis of the advance application of the solidarity clause agreed by the European Council. In particular, the efforts to make the European Defence Agency, the Civil/Military Planning Cell and the Situation Centre operational must continue. All these projects form part of a common policy with which doubts about the future of the Constitutional Treaty cannot be allowed to interfere. That policy and whether or not it succeeds depends solely on the shared resolve of our governments. We ask them to demonstrate that resolve, especially at the present time. But we must also decide on the path to follow in future. Here our position in a number of respects remains unchanged, valid and relevant, regardless of whether the Constitutional Treaty is already regarded as dead or should be given another chance.

In its many contributions to the work of the Convention on the Future of Europe and the Intergovernmental Conference, the Assembly went through the proposed security and defence provisions of the Constitutional Treaty with a fine tooth comb, making clear in which areas that Treaty represented perceptible progress over the Treaty of Nice, and in which there are also major shortcomings.

The widening of the Petersberg tasks, and the possibility of setting up forms of permanent structured and enhanced cooperation under the ESDP, represented substantial progress as compared with the Nice Treaty, but the Assembly had made clear at the same time that such progress was relative, given the complexity of the proposed provisions and their lack of inclusivity in terms of those entitled to participate.

As far as collective defence more specifically is concerned, the Assembly constantly maintained that the proposed provisions of the Constitutional Treaty were not binding and could not replace the modified Brussels Treaty and Article V of the same. As it is now unclear whether the defence provisions of the Constitutional Treaty will take effect, our recommendations that the modified Brussels Treaty be maintained are all the more relevant. In such circumstances, it is high time for the governments of the signatory states of the modified Brussels Treaty to get together round a table to discuss whether there is still any justification for denying the new member states of the European Union and NATO the possibility of acceding to the Treaty and thereby benefiting from the only binding European commitment to collective defence that exists. In view of the growing ambition of the European Union which, according to the European Security Strategy, intends to take on military responsibilities in crisis management, the matter is now urgent.

Conversely, the difficulties that might arise from the fact that the Treaty of Nice, which for the moment is still the legal basis for European Union policy, does not permit enhanced or structured cooperation in the defence and military spheres are of a dogmatic rather than a practical nature. The dogma promulgated by the European Convention to the effect that all cooperation must take place exclusively within the institutional framework of the European Union and decrying any arrangement outside it as potentially threatening to the European Union's future does not hold water as an argument against specific projects. Besides, the Nice Treaty expressly permits development of closer cooperation between two or more member states and makes specific reference to the WEU framework. There is nothing therefore to prevent preparatory work on structured and/or enhanced cooperation going ahead, pending a common decision by governments on the legal framework into which such cooperation should fall in the event of the Constitutional Treaty falling by the wayside.

Moreover, in another area of concern to us, the present crisis could be turned into an opportunity. I will just draw to your attention what my fellow countryman, Armand De Decker said exactly a year ago as President of this Assembly, speaking from this very rostrum. He pointed out first of all that a project as ambitious as the Constitutional Treaty can succeed only if all our societies and public opinion at large take it on board and give it their support. He then went on to refer to statements by Giulio Amato, former Vice-Chairman of the European Convention, who pointed out that the national parliaments that constitute the democratic centre of gravity of modern Europe were the place where that debate must take place, and called on them to form a network for European policy debate.

Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, that network exists here and now, in tangible form, in this very Chamber. It exists in the form of the work done in our committees, the meetings our parliamentarians held this year with the WEU Permanent Council and the EU Political and Security Committee, with the North Atlantic Council and with our parliamentary colleagues in the Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States in St. Petersburg, among others. It exists too in our talks in the Czech Republic, Finland, Latvia, Sweden, Slovakia, Slovenia and others, to mention only part of our work for the first half of this year.

We should bear in mind that the remit for the revision of the treaties that was developed first in Nice, then in Laeken, included defining specifically what the role of the national parliaments within the European architecture should be, among the fundamental problems to be resolved.

Now, the draft submitted by the Convention and adopted by the governments at the Intergovernmental Conference assigned the national parliaments a collective role in running the European Union that was far too restrictive. This problem is one raised in recent weeks, and rightly so, in the public debate, and the new situation provides an opportunity to make good the shortcomings in the Constitutional Treaty in that respect. Because without suitable involvement on the part of the national parliaments, the European Union is bereft of an essential democratic dimension. The WEU Assembly is ready to continue to provide constructive contributions to this debate.

The topics on the agenda for this session show that European security and defence policy still faces numerous challenges. The reports and operative texts drafted here by parliamentarians from some 30 European countries once again show that the Assembly is a basic and essential factor of democratic support for European security policy. Without it, that policy has no real legitimacy.

Note, too, the increasingly inclusive nature of our Assembly. After giving full voting rights last year to all new EU/NATO members, we now propose, via Jean-Guy Branger's excellent report, giving voting rights in committee to our delegations from EU states which are not NATO members. Step by step, de facto, we are putting in place a real interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly which should obviously have a true vocation.

Also this afternoon, to illustrate what the Assembly of WEU has achieved in its first 50 years, we are publishing our history, "The European Defence Debate 1955-2005". I hope you will all enjoy reading it and join me in looking forward to the next 50 years. I invite you all to join us at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg on 23 June to celebrate the anniversary of the first session of the WEU Assembly.

6. Adoption of the draft order of business

The PRESIDENT – We now turn to the draft order of business for the first part of the 51st ordinary session of the Assembly. I understand that Mrs Veenendaal from the Netherlands wishes to speak on the adoption of the order of business.

Mrs Veenendaal, you have the floor.

Mrs VEENENDAAL (*Netherlands*) – I think that most, if not all, of us agree that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has been and still is one of the most important cornerstones of our global security over the 35 years of its existence. Last month, all the parties to the treaty met at the United Nations headquarters in New York for the 2005 review conference. Sadly, the participants failed to reach a consensus and the conference ended in disarray.

The NPT now faces a dual crisis of compliance and confidence. In fact, each of its three pillars – non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear technology – is facing problems. Progress has indeed been made toward disarmament, but there are still more than 27 000 nuclear weapons in the world, and it would seem that nuclear weapon states do not really intend to live up to their NPT-related disarmament commitments. While proliferation was once considered the sole concern of the NPT, recent revelations have exposed the vulnerability of the non-proliferation regime to non-state players.

Ways must be found, too, to reconcile the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy with the imperative of non-proliferation. The non-proliferation regime would not be sustainable if large numbers of countries developed the most sensitive phases of the fuel cycle and equipped themselves with the technology to produce nuclear weapons at short notice. During the review conference, no real debate took place to find an urgently needed solution to these or related issues, such as the strengthening of safeguards for verifying that non-nuclear-weapon state parties to the NPT use nuclear materials and facilities only for peaceful purposes, and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. After the closure of the unsuccessful NPT review conference, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed that on the occasion of the upcoming United Nations General Assembly in September 2005 heads of state and of government should take decisions to break the deadlock on the most pressing challenges in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is by no means certain that they are prepared to respond positively to Kofi Annan's proposal.

Non-proliferation is obviously unsustainable without real and significant further progress in nuclear disarmament. It has also become painfully clear that the nuclear fuel cycle is a much bigger security problem than was recognised when the treaty entered into force in 1970, and that it must be addressed urgently. I propose that the Political Committee prepare a draft report and recommendation on the subject, which could then be discussed and adopted at a plenary session in the future.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mrs Veenendaal. The Assembly takes note of your suggestion and I will draw it to the attention of the Political Committee.

I propose that we adopt the draft order of business contained in Document [1889](#). Are there any objections?...

The draft order of business for the first part of the 51st ordinary session of the Assembly is adopted.

7. Urgent procedure

The PRESIDENT – A request for urgent debate on the state of play as regards the ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe has been made in accordance with Rule 44.1. In accordance with Rule 44.2, we will decide on this request after the first vote this afternoon, on the report by Mr Branger on the “Implementation of Decision 27 and Order 120”.

8. The election of a Vice-President

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the election of a Vice-President of the Assembly for the 51st session. There is one candidate who has been properly sponsored: Mr Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, from Portugal.

Unless there is any objection, in accordance with Rule 9.5, I propose that this candidate be approved by the Assembly by acclamation.

Are there any objections?...

I accordingly declare Mr Ferro Rodrigues elected Vice-President by acclamation. He will take his place in the order of precedence by age.

9. Changes in membership of Committees

The PRESIDENT – In accordance with Rules A7 and A8 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure, I invite the Assembly to ratify the changes in the membership of the Standing Committee and the other Committees since the end of the last session.

Are there any objections?...

The changes are agreed to.

10. Address by Mr Luc Frieden, Minister of Justice, the Treasury, the Budget and Defence of Luxembourg, representing the Luxembourg WEU and EU Presidency

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – The next order of the day is the address by our first speaker of the session, our co-Chairman-in-Office Mr Luc Frieden, the Minister for Justice, the Treasury, the Budget and Defence of Luxembourg.

Minister, it is a pleasure to welcome you here today and to thank you for coming to address our Assembly once again for the traditional debriefing by the presidency. The Luxembourg Presidency has been exemplary throughout the past six months in its relationship with the Assembly, and I should like in particular to mention Ambassador Paul Duhr, Chairman of the WEU Permanent Council and the EU Political and Security Committee, for his helpful attitude. I also thank him and his colleagues, both in Brussels and in post in the embassies of Luxembourg in various countries. Our committees and Rapporteurs who have been on fact-finding missions in recent months have greatly appreciated their cooperation.

We are all very interested to hear your views, Minister, on your presidency and particularly on the progress made in matters of European security and defence, as well as greater cooperation and closer relations with our neighbours. Later this week, Luxembourg will be presiding over an extremely critical European Council. Could you perhaps look into your crystal ball and share your predictions with us?

I would also mention that the modified Brussels Treaty remains fully valid and might be very useful in helping to assess the progress that has been achieved by the ESDP in this very difficult period.

Minister, you have the floor.

Mr FRIEDEN (*Minister of Justice, the Treasury, the Budget and Defence of Luxembourg, representing the Luxembourg WEU and EU Presidency*) (Translation) – Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, honourable members, when I came to WEU in November 2004 to present the aims of the Luxembourg Presidency I made a twofold promise: firstly, that I would return at the end of the presidency to give you an account of the work we had done; secondly I gave an undertaking to take forward the European Security and Defence Policy. I have kept my word and here I am once again to report to you that that the ESDP has moved forward and has been firmed up.

However, what I did not know when I spoke to you in November was that I would be coming back at a time when Europe was going through a major crisis, following the rejection by the peoples of France and the Netherlands of the Constitutional Treaty, a treaty which I supported basically because of the progress it represented in terms of security policy.

It is doubtless difficult to draw conclusions from the many, often contradictory messages that our fellow citizens across Europe are conveying to us in this debate about Europe. Economic problems, a falling off of interest in the European cause and, in particular, in financial solidarity, the rejection of past and future enlargements of Europe which our fellow citizens felt happened too quickly, of “bureaucratic interference” by the European Union in the minutiae of things or an excess of liberalism – all reasons expressed at the time of the referendums.

To take no notice of these messages and carry on as if nothing had happened would in my view be the wrong way of going about things at the moment. No major endeavour can succeed without popular democratic support. However, what I would say clearly is that it would be quite wrong to abandon the grand European design because of the difficulties of the moment. The major challenges and goals of building Europe – peace, liberty, security, prosperity – should once again move to the forefront of our discussions. What we need now, at this moment in time, are fuller explanations, better communication and improved dialogue about Europe with our fellow citizens – a debate that has to go much further than mere discussion of the Constitutional Treaty. We will also doubtless have to revise some of our policies in the light of the messages we have been getting, and the cadence of the enactment of some of our policies in Europe. Time, energy and commitment are needed, for communicating and for listening.

Mr President, we need to keep restating the point that our European construction has been the guarantee for the past 60 years of the peace and stability across our continent that permitted Europe to be born again from its own ashes and the construction of an area of prosperity and well-being with a social model that is unique. The cold war is now over and basic European values are winning through. But those basic values are not guaranteed to last for ever, as we are ever reminded by terrorist attacks, the successive wars in Yugoslavia and conflict in other regions.

As I said in November and as I will repeat today: internal and external security are closely linked. The risks and dangers to which our continent is exposed do not stop at the EU’s borders: regional crises and conflict even at a distance from Europe’s perimeter have a direct, decisive and substantial influence on our security and well-being. For a safe and prosperous Europe, there has to be peace and stability throughout the world.

We now live in a “global” environment, in both political and security terms. And the world is still an unstable place. Terrorism has not been eradicated, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has not been staunched and regional conflict and crisis continue to spread. No single member state of the Union can today meet such challenges on its own. No single Union member state can today cope with such threats and dangers. The response must therefore necessarily be a joint one in which Europe has an essential part to play, along with its partners.

That is why, during my country’s presidency, I paid a great deal of attention to implementation of ESDP operations in the field. The ESDP cannot exist solely on paper. It has to change, to improve people’s lives. Europe must not wage war. It must act to prevent or stop wars. Hence the importance we attach to all aspects of the concept of crisis management.

By way of an illustration of these points, I should like to recap briefly EU operations under the Luxembourg Presidency. Action under Operation Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina is contributing to the achievement in that country of a long-term goal of the European Union: bringing about a stable, peaceful, multiethnic society. Althea, which began in December last, has proved its effectiveness over the first quarter of this year. It is a success for Europe, for ESDP and for Bosnia-Herzegovina. It supports the UN

High Representative's implementation plan, including the fight against organised crime and the stabilisation and association process. Internal and external security go together and Bosnia and Herzegovina provides the perfect example of the fact. A destabilised Bosnia and Herzegovina is not in our interest as it would export its problems and difficulties to its neighbours and to the European Union.

Operation Althea has shown that the European Union and NATO are cooperating in exemplary fashion and developing constructive synergies for managing international crises. I should also like in this connection to express our gratitude to countries not members of the EU that took part in those operations.

Europe must help manage regional crises. We have a special responsibility in that connection in providing help towards rebuilding the future of the Balkan countries. Our military, police and above all diplomatic assistance is crucial to bringing lasting stability to countries that form part of the continent of Europe and where so much misfortune has taken place over the past 15 years.

But, we must also look beyond Europe's borders and especially towards Africa.

The Union will afford all possible support to military, police and civilian endeavours in Sudan, and Darfur, in response to the request from the African Union. The European Union and NATO have been working in step with one another in order to help Sudan. I tried very hard to avoid any competition arising between the two organisations as many of our member states are also NATO members. It would furthermore be ridiculous – what matters most of all is to help those that are suffering and build stability in a highly fraught environment. To do so the European Union and NATO have set up cooperation between them that is exemplary, adding value to both organisations. I am delighted with the success of NATO-EU cooperation in its different forms, in Bosnia and in Darfur.

We will also be active in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Union decided last week to embark on an advice and assistance mission for the reform of the security sector in the DRC. The aim of that mission, to be undertaken in close cooperation and coordination with other players within the international community, is to provide practical support to the relevant DRC security authorities in their effort to integrate the army, while promoting policies that are compatible with human rights, democratic standards and the rule of law.

This mission, the first of its kind, is a practical example of the implementation of the Action Plan for ESDP-support to Peace and Security in Africa. It complements the EUPOL-Kinshasa police mission to bolster the efforts the Commission and the member states are already making towards the reform of the security sector in the DRC.

Those three operations – in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Congo and in the near future in Sudan – are the practical expression of the European Union's determination to act: to promote peace and stability and to contribute to conflict prevention and resolution. The European Union intends to become a global player and, in order to do so, to continue to strengthen its political and diplomatic presence and take forward the ESDP: more capability, more coherence, more partnership. Those are the three key objectives the Luxembourg Presidency has striven for over the last six months. We have moved forward and I am very pleased with what has been done, although it was not altogether an easy ride. The range of differing views in a Europe of 25 nations hardly facilitates progress in an area where consensus is the rule.

The authority of Europe's common foreign policy is based on the fact of Europe having credible assets, which is why the Luxembourg Presidency has put effort into strengthening the operational capability – both civilian and military – of the ESDP and into implementing a strategy for meeting any shortcomings. In order to meet the challenges facing us and be in a position to make a contribution to future crisis management, we pursued and intensified a medium and long-term capability building process.

I am very pleased that the European Union will soon have a rapid response capability based on 13 national or multinational battlegroups. As from January 2007, the EU envisages having full capability to undertake two rapid response missions at the same time, including the capacity to launch such operations virtually simultaneously.

However, for rapid response, the European and national decision-making and planning processes need speeding up. At the European level, we have just, under our Presidency, drawn up rules to ensure that the decision-making process can be completed within a period of five days from the approval of the crisis-management concept by the Council and the decision to launch the operation. There is a need for

machinery that is quick, but which obviously allows for maintain parliamentary scrutiny at national level to take place where needed.

We have also made progress in setting up the European Defence Agency. The Agency must be encouraged to continue implementing its programme of work. I also attach great importance to civilian crisis-management instruments. Strengthening civilian capabilities is an essential improvement towards an integrated approach by the Union. Crisis prevention also means consolidating the rule of law. The EUJUST Themis project in Georgia, which I was able to visit during our presidency, seemed to me to be an interesting and useful project that could serve as an example elsewhere.

Honourable Members, Europe cannot stand in isolation. It must act as one with its allies, especially in the framework of the strategic partnership that links the Union with the United States of America. Transatlantic relations are much more than a mere alliance of interests. They bring together a community of nations all of whom share fundamental values, and have ideals and interests in common. Europe and North America have a shared culture and history. A strong, democratic and prosperous Europe is a security guarantee for the United States. In an interdependent world faced with new threats, any action we take in support of stability, democracy and freedom must be coordinated and our efforts must complement one another. Under the Luxembourg Presidency we were able significantly to improve the nature of transatlantic relations, particularly in the fields of internal security and defence matters. My meetings in Washington and Brussels with the US Defence, Home Security and Justice Ministers have helped strengthen our cooperation.

In the dialogue on security matters we have also taken care to further essential cooperation with Russia. Faced with international crises, international crime and international terrorism, success will come only through stronger cooperation.

The Luxembourg Presidency has attached especial importance to the fight against international terrorism and has been particularly solicitous in ensuring ongoing coordination between the Union's foreign and security policy and the policies conducted in the realm of Justice and Home Affairs. The fact of wearing two hats, as Minister of Defence and Minister of Justice, made it possible for me to succeed in that aim.

I also note with satisfaction that during my country's Presidency the Union prepared a generic document on the standards of behaviour required of all categories of staff involved in ESDP operations, civilian and military alike. This is essential to ensure that our troops in the field, while undertaking difficult missions, are worthy representatives of our continent and its values vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it was obvious to me even back in November that there was a very wide measure of agreement between the political trends I have outlined to you here and those given expression by your Assembly. Your work here has made a significant contribution to shaping security and defence Europe. This new dimension to the European construction that is required on account of the terrorist threat, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and regional crisis-prevention and management must have the support, through parliamentary democracy, of a wider public convinced of the need for it. If we needed reminding of the fact, the French and Dutch referendum vote brought it home to us.

Contrary to a view I hear expressed at times, the new Constitutional Treaty does not imply that Europe will become more militarised. We each have our own army. But it is more efficient and less costly if all of them work together. That is our goal. And reform of our armed forces is necessary to enable them act quickly in an environment that has undergone through-going change over the last 10 years. The important thing is to prevent war, put an end to conflict, defend the basic values we believe in and ensure stability. We must put aside the selfish impulse that leads us to concern ourselves only with what is going on in our immediate vicinity – an impulse that can even be a dangerous one in an interdependent world.

This is also your debate. I want to pay tribute here to the determination with which you have invariably played your part in furthering European security and defence. The Assembly and its parliamentarians are a vital link between the world of politics and the wider public. We must therefore commit ourselves to working together to get over more clearly the message that Europe is and remains an essential instrument of peace, stability, freedom and prosperity and a model for social and economic development. Our shared commitment to the stability and security that are the guarantee of peace and

freedom, achieved through a credible European defence policy is well worth the effort of a visit to this Assembly in these closing stages of the EU Luxembourg Presidency. Thank you.

The PRESIDENT (summary) thanked the Minister for his clear address, his positive attitude to the ESDP and his kind words to the Assembly.

(The speaker continued in English)

Mr Frieden has kindly agreed to answer questions.

I call Mr Wilkinson to ask the first question.

Mr WILKINSON (*United Kingdom*) – May I express my appreciation and that of parliamentary friends in this Assembly to Mr Frieden for coming at the end of the Luxembourg Presidency to give an account of the work of that presidency, which has been fruitful and appreciated by the Assembly? Luxembourg has always taken a great interest in the work of WEU Assembly at a ministerial level and many distinguished parliamentarians from Luxembourg have visited us.

I was happy to hear the Minister's emphasis of the importance of the headline goals and how practically we make military dispositions and budgetary resources available to fulfil our aspirations. Also, the results of the referendums in the Netherlands and France give us an opportunity to concentrate on our core business in this Assembly. Does not the Brussels Treaty as modified in Paris in 1954 give us all the instruments we may need: first in terms of parliamentary oversight through the Assembly of WEU; secondly, the military structure through NATO to ensure our common security and defence; and thirdly through Article V of the treaty, a mutual security guarantee that has stood the test of time?

Is not the challenge to extend that guarantee to other democracies in Europe who wish to enjoy its benefits? Can there be any merit in denying to free democratic nations who share our values the security that we enjoy through Article V? Would it now be the policy of the Council to allow other countries to subscribe to Article V?

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Atkinson.

Mr ATKINSON (*United Kingdom*) – I wish to ask a similar question to that which I asked Mr Frieden in December about the WEU Secretary-General. I notice from the current quarterly review of the Assembly that WEU still has a Secretary-General and that his mandate has been extended until November 2007 with the possibility of a further two-year extension thereafter. However, unlike the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe who reports to, and answers questions regularly from, the Assembly of the Council of Europe, our Assembly has neither seen nor heard from our WEU Secretary-General for many parliamentary sessions over several years. My question is: when will this Assembly see or hear from our WEU Secretary-General and will this happen before his mandate or any possible extension expires in November 2007?

The PRESIDENT – I call the Minister to reply.

Mr FRIEDEN (*Minister of Justice, the Treasury, the Budget and Defence of Luxembourg, representing the Luxembourg WEU and EU Presidency*) – With regard to the first question, I thank Mr Wilkinson for stressing the importance of the headline goals. We are in the process of working towards our objectives for 2010. We have built on the achievements of the presidencies that preceded ours. We have made substantial progress and we hope that the Presidency of the United Kingdom will build on our progress.

This is a long-term process in which we have set up a clear “road map” in which the various steps are clearly defined. We have experienced some delays due to conflicting views on how to approach certain things, but we now have the elements in place to stick to the 2010 headline goal. Furthermore, Mr Wilkinson is right to say that we should build on our achievements of the past with regard to the solidarity clause and the mutual assistance clause. The spirit and rationale that underlies those clauses should be open to other countries that have become democracies where we have an interest in stabilising those countries and bringing them into our general European environment. However, we must not open all of our structures too quickly.

One of the messages from the referendums in France and the Netherlands is that people do not always understand the speed with which we undertake certain things. Therefore a step-by-step approach

starting with consolidating the rule of law in certain countries in terms of security might be helpful. Mr Wilkinson mentioned a route that we might take in bringing those countries closer towards European integration.

With regard to the second question from Mr Atkinson, I am not in a position to say confidently whether such a report will be given to the Assembly immediately. However, I have noted the expression of support on this issue. I could not imagine a valid reason for the Secretary-General of any institution not to provide a report if the Assembly required one. I understand that there is support within the Assembly for such a report and we will take this up with the Secretary-General. I have heard the applause in the hemicycle in support of that request.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Frieden, especially for your open and strong answer to a rather difficult last question, if I might say so. We all know of the problems in that situation.

I call Mr Ferro Rodrigues.

Mr FERRO RODRIGUES (*Portugal*) (summary) said that, as the Minister was closely involved in the financial issues due to be discussed at the forthcoming European Council summit, did he agree that it would be very important, not only because of the ESDP, but also to resuscitate the idea of a common European project? It would be terrible if there were no agreement at the summit on the future of the EU's finances. How did the Minister view the general problem Europe was currently facing?

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Lloyd.

Mr LLOYD (*United Kingdom*) – Mr Frieden, on the subject of Africa we have heard a great deal recently about the genocide in Darfur. What more can we in Europe do in that regard? I am not suggesting that Europe should be able to deal with every situation that arises, but there is a definite mismatch between the political will, and what is proposed and what is being achieved. My specific question is this: what can we do as the Assembly of WEU to make sure that the political will exists to tackle these problems?

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Frieden.

Mr FRIEDEN (*Minister of Justice, the Treasury, the Budget and Defence of Luxembourg, Representing the Luxembourg WEU and EU Presidency*) (summary) repeated that this was a difficult phase in European integration. Indeed, it amounted to a crisis. A detailed look at the underlying reasons for rejection of the Treaty was needed. However, the debate should go beyond mere content.

The reasons why the European project had been conceived were sometimes overlooked in the ongoing debate among European citizens, who focused on domestic issues and then blamed the European Union when things went wrong. The public needed a better explanation of the need for a strong Europe, and for a more complex Europe now that the EU had been enlarged. Security policy affected everyday life in member states and more common action was essential.

In many member states, the “no” campaign had been based either on a rejection of enlargement or on criticism of the pace of enlargement. However, enlargement helped to ensure stability and the consequences of not including countries in structures where building the rule of law was debated could be seen in the fate of the countries of former Yugoslavia.

The pace at which Europe was to move forward needed to be considered carefully but the objective of European integration had to be sustained. Europe should take time to conduct the debate. The process of European integration was not well understood and lack of understanding could mean the collapse of the project.

Significant economic and social achievements had been made, and while Europe's problems were to be acknowledged, its objectives had to be sustained. Achievements had to be consolidated but this was a difficult task, given the divergent views of European countries. The discussions on the EU's financial perspectives provided a case in point. Financial solidarity was a fundamental factor, and while everyone stood to benefit from enlargement, each country had to be ready to accept compromises.

Governments had to be free to face their parliaments without being criticised for having negotiated compromises. No country should be selfish or take a short-term view. Without financial solidarity, political objectives could not be achieved. No finance minister would be a spendthrift, but new policies required sufficient resources.

Concerns should be addressed but European objectives should not be relinquished.

(The speaker continued in English) We have done quite a lot over the past few weeks – perhaps too late – but we also need to explain what we are doing in Africa. Not everyone understands why we need to send soldiers and policemen to Sudan. Europe needs to explain the fact that, in a globalised world, Europe has to play a more global role. That is why, unlike in the past, the European Union has decided to take on the role of ensuring peace and stability on the African continent, especially in regions like Sudan and Darfur. Every day, we see on our TV screens the disastrous situation in which the people living there find themselves.

International cooperation, at least in the recent past, has worked well. It is clear that the African Union, under the general mandate of the United Nations, has to take a leading role, for many political and historical reasons. I am satisfied that we have found a *modus vivendi* between the EU and NATO. The international community has certainly made a huge effort, as was evident during the recent conference in Addis Ababa. We need to provide technical assistance; the only regret is that we have done that so late. A Europe of 25 nations, in a world of 170 nations, sometimes finds it difficult to take concerted action, but we are now all aware that this is an area for which Europe must take an active responsibility.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Minister.

I call Mr Mercan.

Mr MERCAN (*Turkey*) – There are evident differences of opinion between the United States and some European countries about how to combat international terrorism. I should like to hear your thoughts about that, and about how great the threat is. I would also like to hear your thoughts about the greater Middle East project in relation to the security and defence of Europe, and about how Europe should act with regard to Iran's nuclear threat, and America's initiative with regard to Syria.

The PRESIDENT – The next question comes from Mr Clerides.

Mr CLERIDES (*Cyprus*) – We thank the Minister for the insight he has given us into developments in the EU. He said that the pace of enlargement will probably be affected by the “no” votes in the French and Dutch referendums. Could he be a little more specific, with particular reference to candidate countries? That would include Bulgaria and Romania; they are next in line for enlargement. Then there is the opening of accession talks with Turkey, and perhaps Croatia too.

My second question is this: you said that Europe needs to go a little more slowly and that if we go too fast there is a danger that the whole system might collapse. Does that mean that there is no point in continuing with the referendum process in other EU countries, or with the ratification process? Would more “no” votes lead to a deterioration; would more “yes” votes be more divisive in the process of European integration?

The PRESIDENT – Minister, you have the floor.

Mr FRIEDEN (*Minister of Justice, the Treasury, the Budget and Defence of Luxembourg, representing the Luxembourg WEU and EU Presidency*) – Of course the threat from terrorism is still huge, but it is difficult to assess because it comes from different directions. That is why fighting it is so difficult. There is no single identifiable enemy. There are a number of enemies who find common ground and who work together. We must therefore remain vigilant and use all the means at the disposal of the EU to combat the terrorists. Uniquely, the EU has at its disposal not just military forces – they are not the ideal instrument in some circumstances – but it also has policies that need to be applied coherently. Where new information becomes available, strategy must be adapted accordingly.

Discussion of the Middle East forms part of this, but it is only one aspect of the discussion. Wherever there is instability, wherever there are conflicts, they will be exploited by some to divide the world, and terrorism will increase. So Europe has every interest in playing an active role in the region alongside our friends from the United States and all the other international organisations involved.

The idea that Europe has enlarged itself too quickly did not start with the “no” votes in France or the Netherlands. Talking to the citizens of many European countries, and reading their newspapers, makes it clear that the message that enlargement has given rise to many question marks has rendered the functioning of the EU more difficult. In a Europe of 25 nations, with the necessity to decide some issues by unanimity, we needed the Constitutional Treaty because without qualified majority voting on a number

of matters, it is extremely difficult to make progress. We must probably find a way of keeping a European perspective for countries wanting to become members of the EU, because that perspective is the driving force for change in those countries, but we should avoid opening the European Union immediately. I am not saying that this takes ten or 20 years, but I certainly think that we have to think twice before we take new member states into the European Union. It is a little bit like a class at school. If, during the year, a new child comes into the class, the teacher manages quite well. If, suddenly, ten new children come into the classroom, things are more difficult. That does not apply to the countries that signed agreements a few months ago – Romania and Bulgaria.

We must look into certain conditions of the treaty that has been agreed with Romania and Bulgaria, but the timeframe for their full membership of the European Union has been set in the treaties, and of course the treaties form Community law, and we will stick to that. For the other countries, it will take some time, and I think that one can also find intermediary steps to bring countries closer to the European Union prior to their complete membership.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Elo.

Mr ELO (*Finland*) – Mr President and Minister, several of my colleagues have established that we are living through very difficult times. We can really say there is a crisis after the referendums in France and the Netherlands. Of course, it is a little bit dangerous to speculate, but in today's *Le Figaro* there was speculation that there will be a chain-reaction. For example, in your own country and in Portugal, and perhaps also in Denmark, the Constitutional Treaty may be rejected. That could happen in other countries too. Minister, what is your own opinion? Is the Constitutional Treaty dead, or can it be resuscitated?

The second part of my question is that if we suppose that the Constitutional Treaty will never enter into force, what will happen to WEU? Will it be reborn in some way? Do you think that it would be possible to concentrate the European Common Security and Defence Policy in WEU?

The PRESIDENT – I call Lord Judd to ask the final question.

LORD JUDD (*United Kingdom*) – I hope that I will be forgiven if I put my question in two parts. The first part relates to the question asked by David Atkinson, which I thought was extremely important. It is not just the accountability of an officer to the body that he theoretically exists to serve that is important. That speaks for itself, but everything that you have been saying, Minister, about the need for dialogue and the important issues with which we are confronted and the fact that we here represent individual member parliaments around the Community and beyond demonstrates why it is so important for the Secretary-General to come to the Assembly as part of that dialogue and part of that confidence building to which you attach so much importance. And I therefore hope that you will – if I may use the word – remonstrate with him about his failure both in duty and in terms of creative, imaginative political thought to do what is necessary. I think that that is a very important point.

The second question is about the fact that you spoke about the indivisibility of internal and external security. You have responded to questions about the threat of terrorism. Would you agree that, with the new threats that confront us, the battle for hearts and minds is as crucially important as any militaristic, police or methodological arrangements that we make for meeting the challenge? Would you also agree that, if we are to do that, we have to demonstrate at every opportunity that, whatever the challenge, whatever the threat and whatever the dangers, we will not be diverted from our commitment to human rights and all that makes our Community worth having and that we are determined to support the social policies, which will be discussed by the EU in the forthcoming days, for greater social and economic justice in the world, which are part of that battle for hearts and minds?

The PRESIDENT – Mr Frieden, you have the floor.

Mr FRIEDEN (*Minister of Justice, the Treasury, the Budget and Defence of Luxembourg, representing WEU and EU Presidency*) – Mr President, I shall start with the last question because that brings me more easily to the first one. With regard to this report, I confirm what I said beforehand. I fully share your view that institutions that always work in a transparent manner have officials that are accountable. Like you, I am a politician, so I think that it is extremely important that the institutions to which we belong work in a manner whereby all decisions and every aspect of their work can be discussed and disclosed. So I confirm what I said earlier on.

With regard to the progress of Europe, we have to make this a hearts and minds issue. We must show many concrete examples of why the European edifice is so unique that we should not get rid of it too quickly, just by our omissions and our lack of optimism after two negative votes in two countries. I am not pessimistic at all.

With regard to the first question, I think that we now have a debate about Europe, and that is a very positive thing even if we do not like the current mood in that debate. The fact that we discuss the advantages of Europe and why we need to do certain things in common is a very positive aspect, and perhaps we have not done that enough in the past, including in the areas of social policy.

Let us compare this continent with what happens in other places in the world. We have certainly sometimes expressed the same view that Europe could function better in some aspects of its policies. Let us not forget that we certainly have a much stronger social policy on the European continent than elsewhere in the world. Therefore, as I said earlier in my speech, we have a unique model of economic and social development on our continent, and we have to communicate that fact.

We have to explain why we have become such a prosperous continent. That is why I say again and again that we need time to explain why we have done such things and why we need to continue down the road that we have embarked on, even if we have to do so a little more slowly. That is also why I still think that we must continue to explain what Europe is about and why my country, like all your countries, cannot live on its own and why they would face many more difficulties if they tried to do so.

If we had huge walls around our countries, we would be much poorer and we would face different problems. We would not share the same values, including those on human rights that were mentioned, if we did things on our own. I honestly do not think that the treaty is dead – certainly not the objectives of the treaty. The treaty is a difficult phase, but let us imagine for a moment that we explain it well and that at the end of the day most, if not all, countries approve it. That would give a strong signal about the direction in which Europe should move. We would then have to find the necessary legal and political adjustments to the treaty.

However, it would be wrong to bury a treaty only because the citizens of two out of 25 countries have said no to it. Those are important countries and I am not saying that we should disregard their decision but quite a number of other countries have approved the treaty so let us discuss that. Let us have a debate about Europe, including about common defence and then we will get the necessary political support. What we have done on defence in the past few years, which we did not do in the previous 50, means that we are on the road to achieving the headline goal, whatever happens to the treaty, and we will continue the close cooperation. Perhaps we will not have a permanent system of structured cooperation but we may have other means to develop close cooperation, which is essential for a peaceful and stable Europe in the years to come, a Europe that can play an active role in managing international crises that have an impact on the lives of our citizens in the EU.

The PRESIDENT (summary) thanked the Minister and his country, Luxembourg, for providing an excellent example of presidency. He offered Mr Frieden a commemorative tie, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the WEU Assembly.

11. Implementation of Decision 27 and Order 120: arrangements for granting voting rights in committees to the parliamentary delegations of permanent observer and affiliate permanent observer countries

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – The next order of the day is the presentation of and debate on the report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges on the implementation of Decision 27 and Order 120: arrangements for granting voting rights in committees to the parliamentary delegations of permanent observer and affiliate permanent observer countries, and vote on the draft decision, Document [1897](#).

I call the Chairman and Rapporteur, Mr Jean-Guy Branger, to present the report.

Mr BRANGER (*France*) (Translation) – Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, as you know, our Assembly has always endeavoured to ensure that the parliamentary representatives of the countries that have acquired various categories of status in WEU are able to participate as widely as possible in its activities. Within our Assembly, they can be informed and consult with each other, and in particular

engage in a regular institutional dialogue with the European intergovernmental bodies responsible for the European Security and Defence Policy.

That dialogue was conducted with the WEU Council until the member governments took the decision to transfer the exercise of that responsibility to the European Union. Since then our Assembly, in its capacity as the Interparliamentary European Security and Defence Assembly, has been monitoring the development of the ESDP. It remains the only instrument available to the national parliaments of the European states involved in the ESDP for participating collectively in an institutional dialogue with the intergovernmental decision-makers in this area and voting texts drawn up by the Assembly Committees.

At the same time, it is clear that the arrangements for their participation in our Assembly's work continues to be based on the modified Brussels Treaty and the criteria laid down by WEU member states for defining the Organisation's relations with the countries concerned.

When the Maastricht Treaty was signed on 10 December 1991, WEU member states adopted a Declaration in which they invited the EU member states to join WEU or to become observers in it, and proposed to other European NATO member states that were not members of the European Union to become WEU associate members.

Following that Declaration, five EU member states – Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Sweden – opted for observer status in WEU. Four of those states are not members of NATO, although within the European Union they participate fully in the CFSP and ESDP. Denmark is a case apart, since as a member of both the EU and NATO it was entitled to accede to the modified Brussels Treaty, but opted instead for observer status in WEU and decided not to participate either in the ESDP and its structures, or in the European Defence Agency. However, Danish Government representatives attend the meetings of the EU's Political and Security Committee.

Following the last major round of EU and NATO enlargement in spring 2004, the new European Union member states now meet the criteria set out in the Declaration on WEU enlargement adopted by WEU member states at the Maastricht Summit on 10 December 1991, entitling them either to accede to the modified Brussels Treaty or to obtain a status, or change their current status, within WEU.

Given the WEU Council's refusal to take steps to comply with its own Declaration of December 1991, although it does not contest its full validity, the WEU Assembly, through Decisions 27 and 28, has taken action to grant the parliamentary delegations of the eight new EU and NATO member states similar prerogatives as regards voting rights to those of the delegations of WEU full member states, while to the delegations of the two new NATO member states which are not members of the EU, it has granted prerogatives similar to those of WEU associate member states.

In addition, the Assembly undertook in Decision 27 to study the possibility of granting voting rights in committee to the parliamentary delegations of the observer countries. Indeed, on 29 November 2004, on the basis of a report submitted by the Political Committee, it adopted Order 120 instructing the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges to draw up the necessary arrangements for granting the parliamentary delegations of the countries concerned voting rights in committee.

This, then, is the purpose of the report and draft decision that I have the honour of presenting to you now.

Why such a proposal? There are several reasons for giving voting rights in committee to the parliamentary delegations that I have just mentioned.

When the Amsterdam Treaty was signed in July 1997, the WEU Council undertook to develop the role of WEU observer states to allow them to participate fully and on an equal footing in planning decision-making activities within WEU for missions conducted by the latter at the request of the EU and to which they were contributors. It agreed at that time to study the necessary arrangements for strengthening the participation of those countries in all the other activities of WEU, in particular in the fields of armaments, space and military studies.

However, in spite of repeated requests by the Assembly, the Council has never given it detailed information about the specific rights of the observer countries within WEU ministerial organs. Hence, the Assembly was not able to draw the logical conclusions in terms of granting corresponding rights to the parliamentary representatives of those countries within the Assembly.

Moreover, we have noted over the years that the parliamentarians of the observer countries have become increasingly active within the Assembly and its committees and we congratulate them on this.

Yet since the Nice Treaty, all those countries except Denmark have had full rights and obligations within the EU in the areas it inherited from WEU. Hence all those countries are able to participate fully in the decision-making process in the Council of the European Union and the Political and Security Committee in their different formats.

Their parliamentary representatives are fully fledged members of the European Parliament. However, the only existing body that preserves the collective participation of their national parliamentarians in dialogue with the intergovernmental authorities in charge of the ESDP is our Assembly.

Since the countries concerned have not acceded to the modified Brussels Treaty and do not participate in collective defence, it is not possible to give their parliamentary delegations voting rights in the plenary sessions of the Assembly. However in order to strengthen the impact of the Assembly's action and to take properly into account the role played by those countries in the ESDP, it appears to be both legitimate and necessary to grant the relevant parliamentary delegations voting rights in Assembly committees.

That also concerns the parliamentary delegation of Denmark, for which the doors of our Assembly are always open. I am pleased to say that to our Danish colleagues.

As regards Cyprus and Malta, following their accession to the European Union both countries meet the criteria for observer status established by WEU member states in December 1991. Since the WEU Council has refused to take any action to that effect, the Assembly, through Decision 27, has taken the initiative of granting the parliamentary delegations of Cyprus and Malta prerogatives similar to those of the delegations with permanent observer status. Given that both countries are fully fledged participants in the European Union's ESDP, it makes sense to give their delegations to the Assembly voting rights in the committee.

It is therefore proposed to make a number of amendments to the Provisional Rules adopted on 21 October 2004, which are set out in the draft decision. I urge you, on behalf of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges, to approve those amendments.

As I explained last October, these are provisional measures that will apply until such a time as the governments have found a solution to remedy the present inconsistencies, allowing the Assembly to revise its Rules on a permanent basis.

Under the present circumstances, with the debate on building European security and defence having been reopened, we are obliged to be flexible. It is the least we can do and a common courtesy to our colleagues. However, it is essential that our Assembly should, as far as possible, give the representatives of the national parliaments of all the countries involved in the CFSP and ESDP the possibility of expressing their views and of voting.

Thank you for your attention. I hope that you will agree with the Committee and ensure that all Members of Parliament are able to participate fully in our work.

The PRESIDENT – As there are no speakers we shall proceed to vote.

The Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges has presented a draft decision, to which no amendments have been tabled.

We shall now vote on the draft decision contained in Document [1897](#).

Under Rule 35 of the Rules of Procedure, if ten or more representatives or substitutes present in the Chamber so desire, the Assembly shall vote by roll-call on a draft decision.

Does any member wish to propose a vote by roll-call?

That is not the case. We shall vote by show of hands.

(A vote was taken by show of hands)

The draft decision is adopted.

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – Mr Branger, you were the Rapporteur and Chairman of the Committee involved in this report and I congratulate you on your work.

Mr BRANGER (*France*) (Translation) – I thank everyone at WEU for their help.

12. Request for urgent procedure

The PRESIDENT – We will now consider the request for urgent procedure for a motion for a resolution relating to the consequences of the votes against the ratification of the EU Constitutional Treaty. In accordance with paragraph 1 of Rule 44 of the Rules of Procedure, this request has been properly presented.

I remind the Assembly that the following only may be heard: one speaker for the request, one speaker against, the Chairman of the Committee concerned and one representative of the Bureau speaking in its name.

Under paragraph 7 of Rule 32, speaking time is limited to five minutes.

I call Mr Hancock to speak in favour of the request.

Mr HANCOCK (*United Kingdom*) – Thank you, Mr President. I congratulate you on your opening address and the excellent speech from our colleague from Luxembourg, who raised the issue concerned with this urgent request. The request is about where this Assembly stands in the current situation, whether we are in a position to influence it, whether we should try to influence the future of our Assembly or whether we should sit back and wait for events to overtake or bypass us without our having a say. We in the Assembly have agonised for a long time about its future, and rightly so. The one thing we wanted to see was proper parliamentary scrutiny, accountability and transparency, as well as the return to the ownership of the people of Europe of responsibility for defence as well as our part in an ever-changing Europe.

If there is anything to be learned from what has happened over the last few weeks in Europe, it is that the people of Europe have lost faith in their politicians to be able to deliver a comprehensive, transparent argument for the issues that face us in Europe. For whatever reasons, the arguments in various countries are prostituted in order to pursue different ideas against the constitution, to argue about unemployment or about the unpopularity of a president here or a prime minister there, or a particular government. However, that is irrelevant to the issue that we face today. That issue is whether there should be proper parliamentary scrutiny of a matter as important as defence.

I am certain that the people of the United Kingdom would never trust the future of their defence to a European Parliament. They would never allow any prime minister to hand over such decisions, and the British Prime Minister sitting in the House of Commons would never contemplate so doing. However, troops will be deployed under the programme that the European Parliament will pursue. They might not immediately be placed in harm's way, but they will invariably find themselves in harm's way as a direct result of a decision that might have been made initially for reasons of conflict prevention, or of stability in a particular country. These situations soon change, which is why it is important that we should take the opportunity today to say that this situation is relevant to the Assembly, certainly for as long as there is no rearrangement of the constitution that would accept our role in a different form.

I would urge everyone in the Assembly who wants a reason to understand why this is important to read the last WEU Assembly “Quarterly Review”, which spells out the commitment being made and the work carried out by the Assembly in recent months, all of which is important to this crucial issue. Surely, therefore, when we have an opportunity to play a part and to exert our influence, we should attempt to do so. It would be easy for Members to say, “Oh no, let's wait until next week to see the end result.” However, the Assembly will not meet again as a body until December. By that time, we shall be very close to embarking on yet another presidency. It will be in the process of moving from the United Kingdom and we shall have lost an opportunity.

My proposition forms the basis for further action. It is probably nowhere near what will end up being produced by the Political Committee if this question is approved. This proposition will give the Assembly an opportunity to say that it believes this issue to be very important not only to the Assembly but to the people of Europe. It will also give us, as parliamentarians, an opportunity to put into practice what we have been saying for the last goodness knows how many years. I recognise that my time is nearly

up, Mr President. Your rather subtle glance at your watch was the only indication that I need that it is time for me to shut up.

Mr ATKINSON (*United Kingdom*) – Get on with it!

Mr HANCOCK (*United Kingdom*) – Yes, Mr Atkinson, I will get on with it, but for the President's benefit, not yours. I urge the Assembly at least to give these parliamentarians who have been elected to come to this body a chance to have their say and to make further representations to their colleagues across Europe who will finally make the decision on this matter.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you Mr Hancock. I know that Mr Masseret wanted to speak against the proposition. I have told Mr Atkinson that I am unable to call him as only one person is allowed to speak against the proposition under the Rules of Procedure.

Mr MASSERET (*France*) (summary) said that the response of the Socialist Group was that it was not necessary for this debate to be held as the situation was still wide open. WEU would continue to exist. It was better to debate the situation on Wednesday when the Assembly was due to discuss Lord Russell-Johnston's report. The Socialist Group therefore rejected the request. The Assembly was still needed and there was no hurry to force such a debate.

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – Does the Chairman of the Political Committee, Mr Agramunt Font de Mora, wish to speak?

Mr AGRAMUNT FONT de MORA (*Spain*) (summary) said he had not met with the Political Committee, which therefore had no opinion, but this was an important matter for the Assembly as it was for WEU as a whole. The Federated Group of Christian Democrats and European Democrats was against the request. Although there had been two rejections of the constitution in referendums, there were still other countries involved in the process and others that could ratify the constitution through their Parliaments.

The PRESIDENT (summary) – Thank you, Mr Agramunt Font de Mora. That was a very clear position. The Bureau did not discuss this matter. Perhaps we can now hear from the Rapporteur, Lord Russell-Johnston.

Lord RUSSELL-JOHNSTON (*United Kingdom*) – Mr President and colleagues, as you know, my report goes up to 11 May. My co-Rapporteur and myself, and our Chairman, Mr Budin, have discussed the situation and agreed that we could not table meaningful amendments to my report about the French and Dutch referendums. Nor would our committee have adequate time to discuss them.

Inevitably, the debate will include comment on where we now stand, even though my report contains no specific reference to that. It is not for me to express a view on whether there should be a separate, additional urgent debate – except to say that our Committee would obviously take full cognisance of what emerged from such a debate.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Atkinson to raise a point of order.

Mr ATKINSON (*United Kingdom*) – On a point of order Mr President. I seek clarification in response to what we have just heard. Will Lord Russell-Johnston's Committee be meeting before he presents his report to the Assembly on Wednesday, to take account of the views expressed in support of an urgent debate, so as to take account of recent events and possibly amend the report?

The PRESIDENT – I think it would be useful to have the opinion of the Committee for Parliamentary and Public Relations.

Mr BUDIN (*Italy*) (summary) said that he had spoken to Lord Russell-Johnston about this matter and that they had agreed that whatever decision the Assembly took on an emergency debate, it would be dealt with in the context of Lord Russell-Johnston's report. He could not say what decision the Committee might take if the Rapporteur requested a discussion of the report in committee before Wednesday.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Atkinson to raise a point of order.

Mr ATKINSON (*United Kingdom*) – I do not think our Assembly has had the clear response from the Chairman of the Committee that I was hoping for, so as to be able to come to a decision on the request for an urgent debate. If we were to agree to an urgent debate taking place on Wednesday, it would not be

on Lord Russell-Johnston's report; it would be on a new report, as yet not even prepared by the Political Committee. That would surely not be in the best interests of the Assembly.

The PRESIDENT – That was exactly the point made by those who introduced the motion – there would be a separate debate in which Lord Russell-Johnston's report could also be discussed. He might then demand that consideration of the report be put back to the next meeting of the Committee, because so much is emerging in the meantime.

I hope that is clear. I call Mr Hancock to raise a point of order.

Mr HANCOCK (*United Kingdom*) – Mr Atkinson has raised an important point. If there is to be a request to refer back Lord Russell-Johnston's report, the Assembly will not have an opportunity to amend it or to take account of the new situation. That would be nonsensical, because it would rule out any debate on the changed circumstances since he and his co-Rapporteur finished the report on 11 May. The important thing, surely, is for the Assembly to have a debate on the changed situation, then for the report to be referred back, and then for the Committee to take account of the debate in this Chamber and to reflect the views put forward.

The PRESIDENT – We shall now vote on the request for urgent procedure, tabled by Mr Hancock and others.

(A vote was taken by show of hands)

The urgent procedure is not agreed to.

13. Implementation of the European Security Strategy – reply to the annual report of the Council

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the presentation of, and debate on, the report of the Political Committee on implementation of the European Security Strategy – reply to the annual report of the Council and vote on the draft recommendation in Document [1896](#).

I call the Rapporteur to present the report.

Mr HÖFER (*Germany*) (summary) said that, in the light of the vote on early elections in the Bundestag, he had considered postponing the presentation of his report. However, the decision to put it forward had been the right one, as the question of the European Security Strategy was to some extent independent of the current situation. Decisions taken in December 2003 still stood, although the proposed Constitutional Treaty had proposed improvements in the decision-making process.

The report set European Union initiatives in the context of the activity of other organisations. The EU differed from other institutions in terms of its emphasis on integration. The success of integration was seen as an important factor in the success of any security strategy.

The third chapter of the explanatory memorandum provided an analysis of the risks and threats facing Europe that still corresponded to the current situation. The report drew attention to the rise of nationalism in some states, although a detailed study had not yet been carried out. The report also highlighted questions relating to Russia's foreign policy and to the influence of religious convictions in politics.

The aim of the European Security Strategy was to promote the construction of an international order based not on the interests of superpowers but on effective multilateralism. It was imperative that the EU became a credible actor on the European scene, but the creation of new international partnerships should not create new potential for conflict. An EU Foreign Minister, supported by a European External Action Service, would certainly constitute a valuable instrument in the implementation of the Security Strategy.

However, the EU should not lose sight of individual goals such as those set out for 2008 and 2010. These had been established by existing treaties and Nice had confirmed that cooperation could take place outside the European Union.

Chapter IV set out the difficulties of countering more effectively risks such as weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism. Uncertainty remained in relation to Iran's disarmament.

The EU had to spell out the nature of preventive engagement in the context of the United Nations Secretary-General's remarks on the reform of the United Nations. Deployment had to remain a matter for the United Nations Security Council.

The signatories to Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty had to initiate the debate on closer cooperation and the development of a common position on the definition of terrorism. The United States had a very different definition of terrorism from that put forward by the United Nations.

The European Union had only just begun to build capacity for simultaneous security operations. Peacekeeping in Africa was the current priority but the EU might be called upon to provide assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States. This was to be taken not as a threat of interference but as an offer of support.

Chapter VI welcomed the report made by the United Nations Secretary-General in March. The proposals contained in the report indicated that in relation to collective security, the United Nations was moving in the same direction as the European Union.

Transatlantic relations had not been a model for cooperation. A willingness to discuss the ways and means of achieving security was needed on both sides. All the appropriate institutions were to be used to achieve this end, including those of the EU and NATO, as well as contacts between the EU and the United States of America. This presupposed that the exclusion of certain states from the dialogue must cease.

The report also recommended that EU strategic policy should be backed by other interparliamentary institutions.

The last chapter pointed out that the Council had not sent the WEU Assembly its report in good time. He requested that the Council should be minded not to increase the democratic deficit that already existed in this area. The report therefore recommended the maintenance of Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty, and that the Council must find a way to enable new member states to join WEU.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Höfer.

The debate is open.

I call Lord Judd.

Lord JUDD (*United Kingdom*) – It is a privilege to speak immediately after the Rapporteur, who has produced a particularly wise, thoughtful and reflective report that we and others would do well to take seriously. In presenting his report, he has implicitly, or explicitly, centred on crucial issues. One is that in the reality of the age in which we live we are increasingly faced with a uni-polar security system. Many of us are uneasy about that. I am sure that none of us wants to see a rival to the United States, let alone a confrontation with it. We want to work closely with it but we believe that it is important to have an alternative centre of analysis, thought and deliberation, which can influence security policies effectively across the world.

To do that, it is important to have some ability to act independently when that is necessary, particularly in our immediate spheres of responsibility. It is essential to demonstrate that we are not just critical or rhetorical but we are prepared to put our resources and commitment where our words are, and muscle matters in that respect. There are issues that are not given enough attention in security deliberations. I will list them quickly.

As a former Defence Minister, I have often reflected that we keep certain issues in watertight, separate compartments. These days, we are not talking enough about disarmament, arms control, and the arms trade. If we are to move seriously towards global security, those issues must be far more central to our strategy and overall policy. However, we also have to face what is the real threat: the real immediate threat for any of us, the greatest threat, is of course that associated with what we have come to refer to as global terrorism. That is related to issues of exclusion, oppression, deprivation and the existence of a constituency of alienation that can be exploited by those sinister forces that themselves want to play alternative power games.

I referred to those matters in my question to the Minister from Luxembourg, who – I say with the greatest respect – perhaps misunderstood my question. I was saying that we must surely give a high priority to human rights, demonstrating that we are never going to be deflected from our commitment to

human rights, the principle and basis of our whole society as we understand it. The greater the challenges, the more determined we are to stand by human rights and our determination to give substance to the rhetoric about the need for greater economic and social justice in the world.

That is why some of the issues coming before the European Council in the immediate future are so important. They include debt relief, greater aid flows and other questions which are central to the issues of global security. They are not separate, humanitarian watertight compartments.

The Rapporteur spoke a good deal about Russia. I am certain that we must all the time extend the hand of friendship to Russia and seek its full participation in the management of global affairs, not least security affairs, but I am equally convinced that if we are to do that and to have meaningful relations with Russia, we must speak honestly with it. We must not be mealy-mouthed in spelling out that many of the aspects of Russian policy that are becoming disturbingly evident at the moment are working against global security. There is the question of the status of human rights in Russia, the status of freedom of the media, the growing authoritarianism in Russia and the Russian policies in Chechnya.

All I would say about Chechnya, which has a significance way beyond Chechnya itself, is that it is seen as a litmus test for the rest of the world. The policies being pursued in Chechnya are not only often unacceptable in terms of the principles of which I have spoken but are dangerous because they are provoking global terrorism. They are driving people into the arms of the extremists and the manipulators. Therefore, when we talk about relations with Russia, we must put candour high on our agenda because we want effective cooperation with Russia, real friendship and a fruitful relationship that depends on speaking honestly.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Lord Judd. I take this opportunity to welcome among us a former member of the Assembly with a solid political reputation, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Terry Davis.

The next speaker is Mr Clerides.

Mr CLERIDES (*Cyprus*) – I congratulate the Rapporteur on an excellent report that proves the need for this Assembly. Anyone who wants a clear and up-to-date insight into the European Security Strategy has only to read this report, which will be widely publicised and will be used extensively by the EU, the Council and others.

To succeed, any European Security Strategy must be based on standards and values. That must be the case if it is to gain acceptance by the public. It must not concentrate on the Atlantic-European relationship. It must be inward and outward looking. The most important thing for the average European citizen is that the European Security Strategy should not be based on double standards, something our Atlantic allies have not managed to avoid.

If we are to build a common security and defence policy, it must be based on respect for international law and for human rights. That means that the EU should be at the forefront of the policy and should be the basis for implementing any European security strategy. The talk about old and new Europe should be ignored, as it does not relate to our attempts to create a common security strategy. We are all Europeans and we all have the greatest respect for human rights and international law.

The second pillar on which the European Security Strategy should be based is a common European area of 25, or any part of the enlarged EU, where the rule of law, democracy, peace and security are applied uniformly. There can be no common European Security Strategy if that is not coherent or applied uniformly within the territory of the EU.

Finally, the EU should not accept the notion that there are national problems. Even if problems appear to be national or internal, the EU should not turn a blind eye to them and should be involved actively in their resolution. Otherwise we cannot build the common strategy or convince the average European citizen that it can work.

The PRESIDENT – I call Ms Petrescu-Marculeț.

Ms PETRESCU-MARCULEȚ (*Romania*) (summary) congratulated the Rapporteur on his report and said that at an informal meeting of EU defence ministers on 18 March the Luxembourg Presidency had stated its intention to draw up a more effective communications strategy. There was every reason to supplement the European Security Strategy with an interparliamentary one. Romania saw that there were

two tendencies: the neo-liberal tendency, supported by the United Kingdom, and the more corporatist tendency inspired by France. She would be interested to know which economic model would be adopted by the EU and proposed that a little more attention should be paid to specific national issues.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr van Winsen.

Mr van WINSEN (*Netherlands*) – I congratulate the Rapporteur on the report, which deals with a wide spectrum of security and defence development issues. I am glad that he has underlined the role of the WEU Assembly in the ESDP, which is important if we are to avoid the threatened democratic deficit.

I wish to look at an aspect that is nearly forgotten and it is positive that the report took note of the problem. I am talking about the involvement of member states' troops in international units and battlegroups. This subject is mentioned in paragraph (xx) of the draft recommendation. We must take this issue very seriously. Soldiers who work together in such units do so in different circumstances under one command, but the different laws and instructions could easily lead to miscommunication and different behaviour and even to tension in such units. There could be enormous risks and I am glad that the report has drawn attention to this problem.

I hope that our governments pay attention to this matter and perhaps one of our committees could produce some research on it.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Coskunoglu.

Mr COSKUNOGLU (*Turkey*) – I thank the Rapporteur for the comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the subject. I wish to stress the significance of effective multilateralism, which is referred to in the report. Effective multilateralism is an essential objective if the strategy is to succeed.

It is based on a universally accepted system of international law in which a central role is reserved for the United Nations and is indeed a noteworthy principle when tackling threats and challenges.

We also agree that one of the main goals of the European Security Strategy should be the rebuilding of the transatlantic consensus on issues of common interest. European capabilities should be geared not to make Europe a counterweight to the United States, but rather towards achieving the objective of effective multilateralism, as put forth by the Rapporteur in his report.

In this regard it is essential – as in United Nations-EU relations – to establish an effective NATO-EU relationship in order to achieve the European Union's goal of becoming an international player. To accomplish this, the only option is for the two organisations, namely NATO and the EU, to cooperate with, and to complement, each other. Indeed, the Berlin plus arrangements stand as a successful instrument that will enable NATO and the EU to cooperate. An example is Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is being carried out by the EU with recourse to NATO assets and capabilities; it is a success story.

However, we are also encountering certain problems. Indeed, the Rapporteur identifies one such problem in paragraph 142, which states that “not all the EU member states are NATO members and not all NATO members belong to the European Union.” While this could create problems, they could be tackled easily. However, it is important to recall that the non-participation of any EU member state in NATO-EU strategic cooperation is a direct result of the existing framework of cooperation as agreed between the two organisations. It seems therefore that paragraph 142 contains an erroneous suggestion. No country, including Turkey, can refuse to take part in respect of the participation of any other country; this is covered by the existing framework of cooperation. Given Turkey's long-standing support for the ESDP, including actual ongoing contributions to EU military and civilian crisis response operations, it would seem rather unfair to suggest that Turkey is part of the problem. Indeed, we would like to be part of the solution.

I would therefore like to bring this point to the attention of the Rapporteur. The framework for cooperation between NATO and the EU is a result of a lengthy negotiation process and constitutes a mutually accepted compromise between NATO and the EU. Therefore, efforts along these lines should take the already agreed-upon basis as their point of departure. Turkey, a sincere believer in the virtue of NATO-EU cooperation, is ready to work with allies and the EU member states to strengthen NATO-EU cooperation in order to become part of the solution. In this regard, the idea of holding two informal

meetings a year between NATO and EU Foreign Ministers, as proposed by the NATO Secretary-General, is a positive step. We support this constructive idea.

The PRESIDENT – The last speaker on my list is Mr Benediktsson from Iceland. I welcome him to Paris. He represents Iceland as an associate member of our Assembly.

Mr BENEDIKTSSON (*Iceland*) – Thank you, Mr President, for your warm remarks. First, allow me to start by congratulating the Rapporteur, Mr Gerd Höfer, on his contribution to this important debate with a very timely and insightful report. For the past two weeks, we have witnessed a European Union that has in many ways been shaken to its core. The outcomes of the constitutional referendums here in France and in the Netherlands have raised serious questions about the future of the Union and its ability to manage the way in which it will move forward. European political leaders are still trying to grasp what transpired and what went wrong. The truth is that the EU has done too much too fast and thereby surpassed the outer boundaries of what we could call the aggregated political will of the general public. One of the positive lessons that Europe can draw from these events is that the public's interest in the Union is alive and well. Now, it is up to the EU's leaders to capitalise on that and to adjust the pace accordingly. The outcome will be, in my view, a much healthier European Union – a Union of the people of Europe and for the people of Europe.

I started my intervention on these matters because today's debate in European capitals naturally affects the European Security Strategy as it does any other aspect of the European community. As the Rapporteur has rightly pointed out, the European Security Strategy is a very ambitious document and the offspring of international affairs at the time of its writing. While I concur with the general aim of the European Security Strategy and with the ways and means it proposes to solve international crises, I must state my reservations about its inherent tendency to chip away at NATO. The Alliance is, and has been, the primary vehicle for the transatlantic security community, and while welcoming the increased role that the EU intends to play in international relations, we must stand guard against any inclination to undermine NATO.

I would like to raise a few points that have been discussed in the report. First, I concur with the Rapporteur that there is the utmost need clearly to define what the authors of the European Security Strategy mean by "preventive engagement". Another point in question is the yet unresolved matter of the role of national parliaments in the European Security Strategy, and that is justifiably raised by the Rapporteur. Thirdly, I would like to echo what is being said about the dire need to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Along with international terrorism, such proliferation is the main threat facing the international community today. Iran has proved itself to be a defiant nation in terms of its unrelenting quest for nuclear weapons capabilities and has thereby violated its commitments to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Further east, there is of course another defiant nation, North Korea. These states have proved a constant source of worry for the international community. I welcome the initiatives of the United States and of the EU Three, especially the United States' willingness to support European diplomatic efforts. It is in this area that the ambitions of the European Security Strategy can come to fruition.

Once again, I thank the Rapporteur for raising important issues in this report – important in the current European political environment.

The PRESIDENT – The debate is closed.

Does the Rapporteur wish to speak?

Mr HÖFER (*Germany*) (summary) thanked previous speakers and the staff who had assisted him. He thanked Lord Judd because he had addressed the question of an enlarged security concept which was of concern to the Assembly, and said that Mr Clerides had pointed out the importance of human rights. Ms Petrescu Marculeț had asked him to assess the situation between Britain and France but instead the Assembly should discuss a free and social economy. International cooperation should be seen as an integrational task. The implications for individual soldiers had been seen in Kosovo last year. Because many of the member countries overlapped on various bodies, the report had said that this could lead to friction. This was not just a matter for Turkey alone. The United States should be involved as a leading power but the members of the Assembly were here as Europeans and as members of NATO. It was important that anything that was wrong with the Organisation should be discussed.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Höfer.

Does the Committee Chairman wish to speak?

Mr AGRAMUNT FONT de MORA (*Spain*) (summary) said that the report had been adopted unanimously in committee.

The PRESIDENT – The Political Committee has presented a draft recommendation, to which no amendments have been tabled. We will now proceed to vote on the draft recommendation contained in Document [1896](#). Under Rule 35 of the Rules of Procedure, if five or more representatives or substitutes present in the Chamber so desire, the Assembly shall vote by roll call on a draft recommendation.

Does any member wish to propose a vote by roll call? ...

That is not the case. We shall vote by show of hands.

(A vote was taken by show of hands)

The draft recommendation is adopted unanimously.

14. Draft revised budget of the Assembly for 2005 and opinion of the Council

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the presentation of, and debate on, the report of the Committee on Budgetary Affairs and Administration on the draft revised budget of the Assembly for 2005 and opinion of the Council, and vote on the draft revised budget, Document 1891.

I call the Chairman and Rapporteur, Mrs Lucyga, to present the report.

Mrs LUCYGA (*Germany*) (summary) said that those who had been in attendance at the December part-session would remember that the budget for 2005 had been presented but not approved. The decision on the budget had been submitted to the Council in Brussels. The Council had gone a long way to meet the Assembly's proposals and had provided detailed answers to questions. Work on the budget had provided an example of effective cooperation amongst colleagues.

A zero growth rate had been achieved but there was still no freedom of movement in the budget allocation of 7 300 000 euros. The details were set out in Document 1891.

The Assembly could see that there was good news and less good news for the committee to report. The budget had been discussed and agreed with more speed than had been customary in past years. This was a positive sign and in itself a recognition of the valuable work done by the committee. However, in view of all the savings the Assembly had been forced to make, the prospects for the future were not overly optimistic. Nevertheless, the Assembly had to take advantage of the more favourable view in the Council to achieve its aims for the future.

The budget allocation had to be seen in terms of what it would represent for the Assembly's work on issues of common concern. There was no room for manoeuvre within the narrow framework of the budget and minimal changes or unforeseen events might upset the delicate balance which enabled the Assembly to carry on its work.

Increases in salaries and pensions were binding statutory obligations. Giving effect to these increases led to cuts in other areas, however, and governments should be made aware of this fact. Changes in political circumstances might require increased parliamentary activity but there were no resources to meet this possible need.

As it was, the budget only just catered for the needs of the Assembly. However, the work done on the budget by the committee and secretariat represented a significant achievement and thanks were due.

The PRESIDENT – The debate is open.

I call Mr Gaburro.

Mr GABURRO (*Italy*) (summary) thanked the President and congratulated Mrs Lucyga, the committee and secretariat staff. He said that the approach of the Council had been to limit the budget to zero real growth and the Assembly had been asked to provide additional funding for statutory increases in salaries and pensions.

The draft budget had called for a 2.9% increase to take into account these increases and the effect of inflation. However, the reduced allocation raised questions about the Assembly's ability to maintain its work. It was not possible to reduce costs any further and the missing sums had to come from Heads II to V of the operating budget. An increase in the 2006 budget was necessary to provide the required increase in salaries and pensions.

If the trend of the last two years continued, the result would be an inexorable erosion of the resources which enabled the Assembly to function. The Assembly was too important an institution and the work it undertook was too vital to abandon. It was essential that this point was made clear to governments.

Even the more sceptical governments should acknowledge the importance of democratic scrutiny over security and defence exercised by the Assembly. This could be vital at this delicate time for European integration.

The work on the budget had been very technical but it was essential for the mission and ideals of the WEU Assembly in terms of democracy and scrutiny.

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – Does the Rapporteur wish to speak?

Mrs LUCYGA (*Germany*) (summary) thanked Mr Gaburro and said that she was grateful to him for expressing the clear view that budget cuts could not be tolerated. The Assembly did not decide on the budget, but the quality of the Assembly's work depended on the resources to which it had access. Colleagues should stand up to governments and emphasise the high quality of the Assembly's work. They should also send out the signal that an increase in 2006 was crucial to the continuation of this work.

The PRESIDENT (summary) thanked Mrs Lucyga on behalf of the Assembly, and said that particular thanks were due to her for lobbying the German Government in the Bundestag. Once again, there was no deficit and the committee and its staff were to be thanked for their work in negotiating this year; and should take away the best wishes of the Assembly for their work next year.

The PRESIDENT – We shall now vote on the draft budget for the financial year 2005.

(A vote was taken by show of hands)

The draft budget is adopted unanimously.

15. Date, time and orders of the day of the next sitting

The PRESIDENT – That concludes our business for this afternoon.

I propose that the Assembly hold its next public sitting tomorrow morning at 10.00, with the following orders of the day:

1. Address by H.E. Mr Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia
(Questions and answers)
2. Security cooperation between the EU and its eastern neighbours. *(Presentation of and debate on the report of the Political Committee, Doc. [1895](#))*

Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Pierre Masseret (France, Socialist Group)

Co-Rapporteur: Mr Abdülkadir Ates (Turkey, Socialist Group)

3. Address by H.E. Mrs Yuliya Tymoshenko, Prime Minister of Ukraine
(Questions and answers)
4. Security cooperation between the EU and its eastern neighbours. *(Resumed debate on the report of the Political Committee and vote on the draft recommendation, Doc. [1895](#))*

The debate will include a contribution by Ms Govhar Bakhshaliyeva, First Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Are there any objections? ...

The orders of the day for the next sitting are approved.

Does anyone wish to speak? ...

The sitting is closed.

(The sitting was closed at 18.20)