



## European Security and Defence Assembly Assembly of Western European Union

### **History (modified Brussels Treaty, Maastricht, Petersberg, Saint Malo, Nice, Reform Treaty...)**

For more than two generations European security has been a topic of visionary political debate. Europe was the scene of two terrible wars in the first half of the 20th century – maintaining the stability of the European continent has been one of the major political objectives of Europe. Attaining that objective has certainly been one of its greatest achievements.

The debate on European security and stability goes right back to the start of the process of European integration. The failure of the Plevin plan, which envisaged the creation of a real European Defence Community (EDC), the modified Brussels Treaty and the establishment of the North Atlantic Alliance were key stages in the endeavour to give practical effect to a fundamental idea, that of giving Europe a solid security framework. Despite the emergence of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), these questions are still relevant today. Since the “historic” invocation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, security policy has taken on a new dimension. Support from public opinion for the efforts being made to ensure that Europe plays a greater part in international security needs to be stronger now than ever before.

Against this background the **European Security and Defence Assembly/Assembly of Western European Union (WEU)**, which has its premises in Paris, has made a dedicated contribution over the years to all issues of security and stability on the European continent and is continuing to do so.

**The foundation of WEU as an organisation is closely linked with post-war history.** The Korean war, which broke out in 1950, brought about a keen awareness of the need for a European defence that should also include a contribution from West Germany. The solution that finally emerged after difficult discussions at both national and international level was the ambitious project of a European army, built on the principle of integration and following the example of the European Coal and Steel Community.

**The European Defence Community Treaty of 1952** did not, however, receive the necessary ratification by all the parliaments. After the political and diplomatic crisis that followed the rejection of the Treaty by the French National Assembly in August **1954**, the solution found was the enlargement and modification of the 1948 Brussels Treaty. Germany and Italy became members of WEU, various provisions of the Treaty concerning arms control and defence were amended and WEU was established as an organisation. Although cooperation remained intergovernmental, the 1954 modified Brussels Treaty set as its objective to “promote the unity and encourage the progressive integration of Europe”, enshrining a vision that was later to lead to WEU becoming “an integral part of the development of the EU” (Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union as amended in Amsterdam).

The WEU Assembly was convened for the first time the following year. It drew up a **Charter** which was adopted in October **1955**. The mandate of the Assembly was “to proceed on any matter arising out of the Brussels Treaty and upon any matter submitted to the Assembly for an opinion by the Council”. Increasingly, the Assembly and its committees emerged as a platform for informed debate on major events on the international stage and for producing background reports on specific questions. The Assembly monitored changing East-West relations, the role of nuclear weapons and the relationship between deterrence and détente.

During the **mid-1980s** WEU underwent a dynamic revival as a European security organisation. With the emergence of new possibilities for nuclear and conventional disarmament and the risk of a weakening commitment by the United States to the defence of Europe, the nations of western Europe took the initiative to strengthen their role in matters of European security and defence. The

WEU Council stepped up its activities and the new spirit among governments found a vigorous expression in **The Hague Platform of 1987**, where WEU defined a firm European position on security matters in a rapidly changing international environment. In 1988, Portugal and Spain, both now members of the European Community and NATO, acceded to WEU. That same year, WEU undertook its **first military operation** coordinating a naval mission to escort shipping and clear the Strait of Hormuz of mines during the Iran-Iraq war.

The transformation of WEU was further advanced in 1991 in the new provisions on security policy contained in the **Treaty of Maastricht**. The EU, as an emerging player in international affairs, added the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) to its political agenda, which up until then had focused on the common market and external trade. WEU became the **defence arm of the European Union** and was to act as a bridge between NATO and the EU. It became the key vehicle for the new concept of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). The same concept was mirrored in the policy documents adopted by the Atlantic Alliance at its Brussels Summit (1994) and Berlin Ministerial Meeting (1996). In an effort to make WEU an inclusive organisation that could fully assume its pivotal role, a large number of new countries were admitted. Greece became a full member. The non-EU European NATO member countries Iceland, Norway and Turkey became associate members and were later joined by Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic when they joined NATO. Denmark and Ireland became observers, as did Austria, Finland and Sweden when they later joined the EU. Furthermore, WEU was given an operational role with an added military component.

In 1992 the WEU Council took a historic decision in **Petersberg** where it defined the scope of the **crisis-management operations** to which the governments wished to respond. These include humanitarian and rescue missions, peacekeeping and missions of combat forces in crisis management (now known as the "**Petersberg tasks**"). The Petersberg concept still provides the guidelines for today's ESDP crisis-management missions. The revision of the Treaty on European Union in Amsterdam in 1997 brought the 'Petersberg missions' into the Treaty. After 1992 WEU set about acquiring the necessary operating structures and in the years that followed, its new structures were put to the test when it undertook a number of missions in connection with the conflict in former Yugoslavia. Under the auspices of the UN, WEU monitored the arms embargo in the Adriatic (Operation Sharp Guard together with NATO) and on the Danube. Other WEU operational missions include, in coordination with the EU, a multinational police force in the city of Mostar as well as the Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPE) training mission in Albania and, at the request of the EU, demining assistance to Croatia (WEUDAM). In 2001, WEU's police training mission in Albania was converted into a programme for the further development of the judicial system under the auspices of the EU, while the successful demining operation in Croatia was simply terminated. One of the features of MAPE was that almost all the WEU nations were involved in providing the human and financial resources, making it a good example of successful European cooperation and solidarity.

The Franco-British Summit in **Saint Malo** in December 1998 opened a new chapter in European security policy. For the first time in its history, the European Union directly assumed the role of a military power. With the decisions taken in 1999 by the European Council in **Cologne** and **Helsinki**, the EU embarked on the creation of EU crisis-management capabilities. The decisions taken by the heads of state and government at the European Council in **Nice** in December 2000 formally established the necessary decision-making bodies (a Political and Security Committee and a Military Committee reinforced by a Military Staff) within the second pillar of the EU. They also endorsed a military 'headline goal' for a 50 000 to 60 000-strong European crisis reaction force and ambitious capability targets. In December 2001, the European Union issued its Laeken Declaration confirming a limited operational capability for crisis-management missions. Since then, the EU has launched different types of civil and military crisis-management missions. The biggest EU military operation so far is EUFOR-Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, on 2 December 2004, took over from NATO's SFOR mission, and operates under the so-called "Berlin plus" cooperation arrangements making use of NATO assets and capabilities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU also launched its first ESDP operation ever, a police training mission which started on 1 January 2003. It followed on from the UN's International Police Task Force. Since then the EU has launched other military and civilian crisis-management missions, in particular in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Palestinian Territories, Indonesia, Moldova and Kosovo.

These profound changes in the European security architecture have made WEU's pivotal role in

operational matters by and large obsolete. However, as long as there is no agreement on a collective defence clause in the EU framework, it is essential that the modified Brussels Treaty should remain in force if we wish to develop a common defence.

Following the French and Dutch “no” votes in the 2005 referendums on the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, the EU governments extended the “period of reflection” on the future of Europe. At its meeting on 21 and 22 June 2007, the European Council decided to convene a new intergovernmental conference (IGC) in order to amend the EU Treaties. It published a clear mandate for the IGC to draw up a “Reform Treaty” with a view to enhancing the efficiency and democratic legitimacy of the enlarged Union. Following the IGC conference, held from July to October 2007, the **Treaty amending the Treaty on EU and the Treaty establishing the EC** was approved by the Heads of State and Government of the twenty-seven member states. It was signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007 and came into force on 1 December 2009.

A new article on the role of national parliaments in the EU makes provision for interparliamentary cooperation between national parliaments and with the European Parliament (EP) in accordance with the Protocol on the role of national parliaments in the EU, which points to the complementary work of national parliamentarians and members of the EP and recognises the need for closer cooperation between them. While the protocol, which is appended to the Reform Treaty, opens up additional possibilities for interparliamentary dialogue on the common security and defence policy, it is insufficient because it goes no further than to propose the holding of conferences as the framework for dialogue. But the Assembly has for many years affirmed in both its reports and its dialogue with the governments of the Member States that, in the interest of democratic legitimacy, **European foreign, security and defence policy must be subject to democratic scrutiny by national parliamentarians meeting in a European interparliamentary assembly.**

For more than 50 years the Assembly, through its political proposals, has been working for more European integration in the field of security and defence. It enables the national parliamentarians of European countries to make political recommendations **collectively** to European governments. For as long as there is no common defence in the EU, the Assembly provides the solution to the problem of a democratic deficit within the EU by exercising “**interparliamentary**” scrutiny over what the governments have stated will remain an “**intergovernmental**” policy doubtless for a long time to come. The European Security and Defence Assembly believes this problem has to be addressed as a matter of urgency following the entry into force of the new EU Reform Treaty. De jure recognition by the EU of the Assembly’s role is long overdue.