

Platform on European Security Interests (The Hague, 27 October 1987)

Caption: On 27 October 1987 in The Hague, given the development of East–West relations, the Foreign and Defence Ministers of the Member States of Western European Union (WEU) adopt a ‘Platform on European Security Interests’. By emphasising the essential nature of Western Europe’s contribution to the balance of conventional and nuclear forces in a Europe which remains divided, they confirm their determination to strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance and to develop a European identity in defence matters.

Source: Western European Union - Union de l'Europe occidentale. [EN LIGNE]. [Bruxelles]: Union de l'Europe occidentale, [02.08.2002]. Disponible sur <http://www.weu.int/index.html>.

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

Platform on European

Security Interests

The Hague, 27 October 1987

1. Stressing the dedication of our countries to the principles upon which our democracies are based and resolved to preserve peace in freedom, we, the Foreign and Defence Ministers of the member States of WEU, reaffirm the common destiny which binds our countries.
2. We recall our commitment to build a European union in accordance with the Single European Act, which we all signed as members of the European Community. We are convinced that the construction of an integrated Europe will remain incomplete as long as it does not include security and defence.
3. An important means to this end is the modified Brussels Treaty. This Treaty with its far-reaching obligations to collective defence, marked one of the early steps on the road to European unification. It also envisages the progressive association of other States inspired by the same ideals and animated by the like determination. We see the revitalisation of WEU as an important contribution to the broader process of European unification.
4. We intend therefore to develop a more cohesive European defence identity which will translate more effectively into practice the obligations of solidarity to which we are committed through the modified Brussels and North Atlantic Treaties.
5. We highly value the continued involvement in this endeavour of the WEU Assembly which is the only European parliamentary body mandated by treaty to discuss all aspects of security including defence.

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Our starting point is the present conditions of European security.

1. Europe remains at the centre of East-West relations and, forty years after the end of the Second World War, a divided continent. The human consequences of this division remain unacceptable, although certain concrete improvements have been made on a bilateral level and on the basis of the Helsinki Final Act. We owe it to our people to overcome this situation and to exploit in the interest of all Europeans the opportunities for further improvements which may present themselves.
2. New developments in East-West relations, particularly in arms control and disarmament, and also other developments, for example in the sphere of technology, could have far-reaching implications for European security.
3. We have not yet witnessed any lessening of the military build-up which the Soviet Union has sustained over so many years. The geostrategic situation of Western Europe makes it particularly vulnerable to the superior conventional, chemical and nuclear forces of the Warsaw Pact. This is the fundamental problem for European security. The Warsaw Pact's superior conventional forces and its capability for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action are of special concern in this context.
4. Under these conditions the security of the Western European countries can only be ensured in close association with our North American allies. The security of the Alliance is indivisible. The partnership between the two sides of the Atlantic rests on the twin foundations of shared values and interests. Just as the commitment of the North American democracies is vital to Europe's security, a free, independent and increasingly more united Western Europe is vital to the security of North America.
5. It is our conviction that the balanced policy of the Harmel Report remains valid. Political solidarity and adequate military strength within the Atlantic Alliance, arms control, disarmament and the search for genuine détente continue to be integral parts of this policy. Military security and a policy of détente are not contradictory but complementary.

II European security should be based on the following criteria:

1. It remains our primary objective to prevent any kind of war. It is our purpose to preserve our security by maintaining defence readiness and military capabilities adequate to deter aggression and intimidation without seeking military superiority.
2. In the present circumstances and as far as we can foresee, there is no alternative to the Western strategy for the prevention of war, which has ensured peace in freedom for an unprecedented period of European history. To be credible and effective, the strategy of deterrence and defence must continue to be based on an adequate mix of appropriate nuclear and conventional forces, only the nuclear element of which can confront a potential aggressor with an unacceptable risk.
3. The substantial presence of US conventional and nuclear forces plays an irreplaceable part in the defence of Europe. They embody the American commitment to the defence of Europe and provide the indispensable linkage with the US strategic deterrent.
4. European forces play an essential role: the overall credibility of the Western strategy of deterrence and defence cannot be maintained without a major European contribution, not least because the conventional imbalance affects the security of Western Europe in a very direct way.

The Europeans have a major responsibility both in the field of conventional and nuclear defence. In the conventional field, the forces of the WEU member States represent an essential part of those of the Alliance. As regards nuclear forces, all of which form a part of deterrence, the cooperative arrangements that certain member States maintain with the United States are necessary for the security of Europe. The independent forces of France and the United Kingdom contribute to overall deterrence and security.

5. Arms control and disarmament are an integral part of Western security policy and not an alternative to it. They should lead to a stable balance of forces at the lowest level compatible with our security. Arms control policy should, like our defence policy, take into account the specific European security interests in an evolving situation. It must be consistent with the maintenance of the strategic unity of the Alliance and should not preclude closer European defence cooperation. Arms control agreements have to be effectively verifiable and stand the test of time. East and West have a common interest in achieving this.

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III The Member States of WEU intend to assume fully their responsibilities:

a. In the field of Western defence

1. We recall the fundamental obligation of Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty to provide all the military and other aid and assistance in our power in the event of armed attack on any one of us. This pledge, which reflects our common destiny, reinforces our commitments under the Atlantic Alliance, to which we all belong, and which we are resolved to preserve.

2. It is our conviction that a more united Europe will make a stronger contribution to the Alliance, to the benefit of Western security as a whole. This will enhance the European role in the Alliance and ensure the basis for a balanced partnership across the Atlantic. We are resolved to strengthen the European pillar of the Alliance.

3. We are each determined to carry our share of the common defence in both the conventional and the nuclear field, in accordance with the principles of risk- and burden-sharing which are fundamental to allied cohesion.

In the conventional field, all of us will continue to play our part in the on-going efforts to improve our defences;

In the nuclear field also, we shall continue to carry our share: some of us by pursuing appropriate cooperative arrangements with the US; the UK and France by continuing to maintain independent nuclear forces, the credibility of which they are determined to preserve

4. We remain determined to pursue European integration including security and defence and make a more effective contribution to the common defence of the West.

To this end we shall:

ensure that our determination to defend any member country at its borders is made clearly manifest by means of appropriate arrangements,

improve our consultations and extend our co-ordination in defence and security matters and examine all practical steps to this end,

make the best possible use of the existing institutional mechanisms to involve the defence ministers and their representatives in the work of WEU,

see to it that the level of each country's contribution to the common defence adequately reflects its capabilities,

aim at a more effective use of existing resources, inter alia by expanding bilateral and regional military cooperation, pursue our efforts to maintain in Europe a technologically advanced industrial base and intensify armaments cooperation,

concert our policies on crises outside Europe in so far as they may affect our security interests.

5. Emphasizing the vital contribution of the non WEU members of the Alliance to the common security and defence, we will continue to keep them informed of our activities.

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b. In the field of arms control and disarmament

1. We shall pursue an active arms control and disarmament policy aimed at influencing future developments in such a way as to enhance security and to foster stability and cooperation in the whole of Europe. The steadfastness and cohesion of the Alliance and close consultations among all the Allies remain essential if concrete results are to be brought about.

2. We are committed to elaborate further our comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament in accordance with the Alliance's declaration of 12 June 1987 and we will work within the framework of this concept as envisaged particularly in paragraphs 7 and 8 of this declaration. An agreement between the US and the Soviet Union for the global elimination of land-based INF missiles with a range between 500 and 5500 km will constitute an important element of such an approach.

3. In pursuing such an approach we shall exploit all opportunities to make further progress towards arms reductions, compatible with our security and with our priorities, taking into account the fact that work in this area raises complex and interrelated issues. We shall evaluate them together, bearing in mind the political and military requirements of our security and progress in the different negotiations.

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c. In the field of East-West dialogue and cooperation

1. The common responsibility of all Europeans is not only to preserve the peace but to shape it constructively. The Helsinki Final Act continues to serve as our guide to the fulfilment of the objective of gradually overcoming the division of Europe. We shall therefore continue to make full use of the CSCE process in order to promote comprehensive cooperation among all participating states.

2. The possibilities contained in the Final Act should be fully exploited. We therefore intend:

to seek to increase the transparency of military potentials and activities and the calculability of behaviour in accordance with the Stockholm Document of 1986 by further confidence-building measures.

vigorously to pursue our efforts to provide for the full respect of human rights without which no genuine peace is possible.

to open new mutually beneficial possibilities in the fields of economy, technology, science and the protection of the environment.

to achieve more opportunities for the people in the whole of Europe to move freely and to exchange opinions and information and to intensify cultural exchanges,

and thus to promote concrete improvements for the benefit of all people in Europe.

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It is our objective to further European integration. In this perspective we will continue our efforts towards closer security cooperation, maintaining coupling with the United States and ensuring conditions of equal security in the Alliance as a whole.

We are conscious of the common heritage of our divided continent, all the people of which have an equal right to live in peace and freedom. That is why we are determined to do all in our power to achieve our ultimate goal of a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe.