

Document on institutional reform of WEU (Rome, 26 and 27 October 1984)

Caption: At an extraordinary session held in Rome on 26 and 27 October 1984 to mark the 30th anniversary of the Modified Brussels Treaty, the Council of Ministers of Western European Union (WEU), composed of the Foreign and Defence Ministers, decides to make fuller use of the institutions of WEU and, to this end, to bring the existing institutions into line with the organisation's new tasks.

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INSTITUTIONAL REFORM OF W.E.U.

At their meeting in Rome on 26 and 27 October 1984 to mark the 30th anniversary of the modified Brussels Treaty of 1954, the Foreign and Defence Ministers of the signatory States decided to make fuller use of the institutions of W.E.U. and, accordingly, to bring the existing institutions into line with the changed tasks of the Organisation.

I. Activation of the Council

The Ministers regard activation of the Council as a central element in the efforts to make greater use of Western European Union. In conformity with Article VIII of the modified Brussels Treaty, which allows the Council to decide on the organisation of its work and to consult or set up subsidiary bodies, the Ministers decided the following:

1. The Council would in future normally meet twice a year at ministerial level. One of these sessions could take place in a small group with no formal agenda. These meetings would bring together the Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers. Separate meetings of the Foreign Ministers and/or Defence Ministers could also take place if the member States considered it necessary, to discuss matters lying within their respective area of responsibility.

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2. The presidency of the Council will be held by each member State for a one year term. Meetings of the Council will in principle take place in the country holding the presidency.
3. The work of the Permanent Council will have to be intensified in line with the increased activities of the Council of Ministers. The Permanent Council, mandated to discuss in greater detail the views expressed by the Ministers and to follow up their decisions, will, pursuant to the second paragraph of the above-mentioned Article VIII, make the necessary arrangements for this purpose, including as appropriate the setting-up of working groups.
4. The Secretariat-General should be adapted to take account of the enhanced activities of the Council of Ministers and the Permanent Council.
5. The Ministers have asked the Secretariat-General to submit, as soon as possible, a report on the work done by the Secretariat and to consider what measures might be necessary to strengthen its activities. In this connection, the Ministers stated that any reorganisation in the staffing of the Secretariat-General should take account of the adjustments made elsewhere in the other W.E.U. institutions. They stressed that any proposed adjustments should not result in an overall increase in the Organisation's establishment.

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II. Relations between Council and Assembly

The Ministers supported the idea of greater contact between the Council and the Assembly.

Recalling that, under Article IX of the Treaty, the Assembly is expressly required to discuss the reports submitted to it by the Council of Ministers on matters concerning the security and defence of the member States, and considering that the practice adopted has enabled the Assembly to widen the topics of its discussions, the Ministers wish to see the Assembly playing an increasing role, particularly by contributing even more to associating public opinion in the member States with the policy statements of the Council, which expresses the political will of the individual governments. Accordingly, the Ministers submit the following proposals to the Assembly:

1. In order to improve the contacts between the Council and the Assembly, the Ministers believe there are a number of options, noteworthy among which are:

- A substantial improvement in the existing procedures for giving written replies to Assembly Recommendations and questions. On this point, the Ministers consider that a leading role should be given to the Presidency, making the best use of the services of the Secretariat-General.

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- The development of informal contacts between government representatives and the representatives of the Assembly.

- If appropriate, a colloquium involving the Presidency of the Council and the Committees of the Assembly.

- The improvement of the contacts that traditionally take place after the ministerial meetings of the Council, and more generally; the improvement of the procedures under which the Assembly is kept informed by the Presidency, whose representatives could - between the Assembly sessions - keep the various committees up to date with the work of the Council and even take part in their discussions.

- The possibility that the Assembly might make use of contributions from the technical institutions of W.E.U..

2. Convinced that greater cooperation between the Council and the Assembly is a key factor in the enhanced utilisation of W.E.U., the Ministers underscored the importance they attach to the Recommendations and the work of the Assembly.

3. Without wishing to preempt the decision of the members of the Assembly, the Ministers also stress the value, in their eyes, of developing a dialogue between the Assembly and other parliaments or parliamentary institutions.

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4. The Ministers also stated that the member States were always ready to inform their national delegations of their governments' attitude to questions dealt with in Assembly reports and were prepared to offer information to their rapporteurs.

III. Agency for the Control of Armaments and the Standing Armaments Committee

The Ministers also considered the activity of the Agency for the Control of Armaments (ACA) and the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC).

1. In connection with the Agency, which was set up in 1954 to monitor compliance with the voluntary arms limitations agreed by the contracting parties; the Ministers underlined the exemplary nature of these commitments, which had instilled confidence among the signatory States and for this reason they acclaimed the work that the Agency had done.

Noting the value of the experience thus gained; the Ministers emphasised the interest that they attached to the development by the WEU member States of reflection on arms control and disarmament questions.

2. As regards the SAC, the Ministers recalled the importance of the tasks defined in the decision of the Council of 7 May 1955 which established this body.

In this connection, they emphasised that the existence of an effective and competitive European armaments industry was a fundamental aspect of Europe's contribution to the Atlantic Alliance. In this context, it seemed very important to them that the seven Member States of WEU should be able

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to harmonise their positions in this sphere and coordinate their efforts with a view to increasing the effectiveness of cooperative activity in the various multilateral fora.

3. With the aim of better adapting the institutions of W.E.U. to present and future requirements, the Ministers reached the following decisions.

a) Noting that the control functions originally assigned to the ACA have now become, for the most part, superfluous, the Ministers decided, in accordance with Article V of Protocol No. III, which allows the Council to make changes to the ACA's control activity, to abolish gradually the remaining quantitative controls on conventional weapons. The Ministers agreed that these controls should be substantially reduced by 1 January 1985 and entirely lifted by 1 January 1986. The commitments and controls concerning ABC weapons would be maintained at the existing level and in accordance with the procedures agreed up to the present time.

b) The Ministers have instructed the Permanent Council to define, in consultation with the directors of the ACA and the SAC, the precise modalities of an overall reorganisation affecting both the ACA, the International Secretariat of the SAC and the SAC which could be structured in such a way as to fulfil a threefold task:

- to study questions relating to arms control and disarmament whilst carrying out the remaining control functions;

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- undertake the function of studying security and defence problems;

- to contribute actively to the development of European armaments cooperation.

c) As regards the first two functions indicated above, the intention would be to have available a common basis of analysis which could form a useful point of reference for the work of both the Council and the Assembly and also for informing public opinion.

This reorganisation will have to be carried out taking into account, on the one hand, changes in duties resulting first from the reduction and then from the abolition of the control tasks and, on the other hand, the need to have the appropriate experts available.

d) As regards armaments cooperation, W.E.U. should be in a position to play an active role in providing political impetus:

by supporting all cooperative efforts including those of the IEPG and the CNAD;

by encouraging in particular the activity of the IEPG as a forum whose main objective is to promote European cooperation and also to contribute to the development of balanced cooperation within the Atlantic Alliance;

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- by developing continuing concertation with the various existing bodies.
- e) In this general context, the Permanent Council will also take into account the existence of the FINABEL framework.
- f) In carrying out this overall reorganisation the Permanent Council will have to:
 - propose a precise organisation table which will make it possible to define and give a breakdown of the posts required for carrying out the three functions referred to above;
 - ensure that the various arrangements proposed remain within the present limits in terms of staff and the Organisation's budget, without weakening W.E.U.'s ability to play its role.

The Ministers asked the Permanent Council to complete its work before their next session. They expressed the wish, however, that in the meantime a start should be made on all or part of the new tasks as soon as possible.

IV. Contacts with non-member States

1. The Ministers also attached great importance to liaison with those States in the Alliance which are not members of W.E.U..

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2. Invoking the relevant provisions of the modified Brussels Treaty, and in particular Article IV, the Ministers pointed out that it was the responsibility of the Presidency of W.E.U. to inform those countries on either a bilateral or multilateral basis.