

Conclusions of the Vienna European Council: extract on preparations for the implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty (11 and 12 December 1998)

Caption: Meeting in Vienna on 11 and 12 December 1998, the European Council believes, following the example of the Franco-British St. Malo Declaration, that the common foreign and security policy must be backed by credible operational capabilities in order for the European Union (EU) to have a strong presence on the international stage. The European Council invites the Council to bring forward, in agreement with Western European Union (WEU), the completion of arrangements for enhanced cooperation between the EU and WEU.

Source: Presidency Conclusions. Vienna European Council, 12 December 1998. [ON-LINE]. [s.l.]: Council of the European Union, [24.11.2005]. 00300/1/98 REV. Disponible sur http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/00300-R1.EN8.htm.

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Vienna European Council (11 and 12 December 1998) Presidency Conclusions

The European Council met in Vienna on 11 and 12 December 1998 to discuss the main issues and challenges facing the European Union. It began its proceedings with an exchange of views with Mr José María GIL-ROBLES, President of the European Parliament, on the main subjects for discussion.

[...]

I. Vienna Strategy for Europe

1. European integration has gained new momentum. The single currency is about to be launched. Coordinated efforts to promote employment have produced encouraging results. The enlargement process is well under way. As the millennium draws to a close, the Union will have to strengthen its ability to serve its citizens.

2. At Cardiff, the European Council initiated a broad debate on the future development of the European Union. The Pörschach meeting emphasised the need for a strong and effective Union. In this spirit, the Vienna European Council has identified four issues of primary concern to European citizens where rapid and effective action is necessary. It has therefore agreed on the following "Vienna Strategy for Europe":

[...]

Promoting stability and prosperity throughout Europe and in the world

- Dynamic continuation of accession negotiations and preparations, and the submission of progress reports by the Commission on candidate countries in view of the Helsinki European Council.

- Effective application of the new Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) instruments following the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty (High Representative, CFSP planning and early warning unit, improved decision-making mechanisms); review at the Helsinki European Council.

- Preparation of the first Common Strategies on Russia, Ukraine, the Mediterranean Region and the Western Balkans; first adoption at the Cologne European Council.

- Continuation of reflection on the development of a European security and defence policy; examination at the Cologne European Council.

Faisant fond sur ces éléments, le Conseil européen adoptera, lors de sa réunion d'Helsinki, une "déclaration du millénaire" sur les priorités de l'Union au cours des années à venir.

[...]

VII. Preparing the Implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty

71. The European Council reaffirms the importance it attaches to a full functioning of the Amsterdam Treaty as soon as it enters into force. It welcomes the progress achieved so far in the preparatory work and underlines the need to finalise urgently the necessary measures including in the important area of Justice and Home Affairs.

72. The European Council took note of the draft Statute for Members of the European Parliament and invites the institutions involved to ensure the necessary follow-up.

73. Regarding the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the European Council agrees that the Secretary-General of the Council and High Representative for the CFSP will be appointed as soon as possible and will

be a personality with a strong political profile. The European Council takes note of the work undertaken by the Council concerning the establishment of a Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit within the General Secretariat.

74. The European Council invites the Council in accordance with the recommendations in its report to prepare common strategies on Russia, Ukraine, the Mediterranean region, taking specifically into account the Barcelona Process and the Middle East Peace Process, as well as on the Western Balkans, on the understanding that the first common strategy will be on Russia. When identifying further subjects for common strategies, thematic subjects should also be considered.

75. The European Council invites the Council to bring forward, in agreement with the WEU, the completion of arrangements for enhanced cooperation under the Protocol on Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union, as amended by the Amsterdam Treaty, so that these may come into effect on the Treaty's entry into force.

76. The European Council welcomes the new impetus given to the debate on a common European policy on security and defence. The European Council considers that in order for the European Union to be in a position to play its full role on the international stage, the CFSP must be backed by credible operational capabilities. It welcomes the Franco-British declaration made on 4 December 1998 in St Malo. The reinforcement of European solidarity must take into account the various positions of European States, including the obligations of some Member States within Nato.

77. It welcomes the intention of the WEU to conduct an audit of the assets available for European operations.

78. The European Council invites the incoming Presidency to further this debate in the wake of discussions in the WEU Ministerial in Rome on 16 November and in the General Affairs Council held on 7 December. The European Council will examine this issue in Cologne on 3 and 4 June 1999.

[...]