

Declaration by the WEU Council of Ministers (Porto, 15 and 16 May 2000)

Caption: Meeting in Porto on 15 and 16 May 2000, the Council of Ministers of Western European Union (WEU) recognise that the decisions of the Helsinki European Council of 10 and 11 December 1999 will have 'profound repercussions' on WEU.

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION



Porto Declaration

WEU Council of Ministers

Porto, 15-16 May 2000

WEU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS 15-16 May 2000

PORTO DECLARATION

1. Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence of the WEU nations met in Porto on 15-16 May. The WEU Council of Ministers was preceded by a meeting of the Defence Ministers of the 13 members of the Western European Armaments Group with the participation of their colleagues from Austria, Finland and Sweden and also, for the first time, from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

2. Ministers welcomed the progress made by the European Union in carrying forward the decisions of the Cologne and Helsinki European Councils to strengthen European security and defence. They welcomed NATO's work on the further implementation of the NATO Washington Summit decisions concerning ESDI in order to reinforce the European pillar of the Alliance. They expressed the conviction that these developments will contribute to reinforcing the Euro-Atlantic partnership.

They looked forward to the further steps to be taken at the Feira European Council which will strengthen the common European security and defence policy, inter alia, by:

further work on the process of elaborating the headline goal. They recalled with satisfaction that the European NATO members who are not EU Member States and other countries who are candidates for accession to the European Union will be invited to contribute to this improvement of European military capabilities;

proposals on appropriate arrangements that, while respecting the EU's decision-making autonomy, will allow these same countries to contribute to EU military crisis management;

proposals on principles for EU-NATO consultation on military issues and recommendations on the development of modalities for EU-NATO relations, to permit cooperation on the appropriate military response to a crisis, as set out in Washington and at Cologne;

the further development of the non-military crisis management track.

In this context, Ministers also recalled the informal reflection on security and defence in Europe which WEU had undertaken over the past eighteen months which had demonstrated a common willingness to develop satisfactory arrangements that serve the interests of all WEU nations.

3. Ministers agreed that WEU stood ready to support, as required, the development of the functions identified by the EU as being necessary to fulfil its new responsibilities in the field of the Petersberg tasks. They recognised that the fulfilment by the EU of these new responsibilities would have profound repercussions for WEU as an Organization. They acknowledged that, in the coming months, relevant decisions need to be taken on WEU's future role, and tasked the Permanent Council to examine the wide range of measures that would need to be taken at the appropriate time within WEU, in accordance with developments in the EU.

In this context

They noted that, by their next meeting, a report/transition plan by the Military Committee will draw the consequences for the WEU Military Staff's activities from these developments;

They underlined that WEU remains ready to make available to the European Union if it so wishes the WEU Satellite Centre and Institute for Security Studies. Consideration would need to be given in due time to the future of these bodies;

They acknowledged the competence and dedication of WEU's international staff and their most valuable contribution to the work of the Organization. Ministers expressed their commitment to do their utmost to contribute to finding appropriate solutions which take into account the professional expertise and the legitimate expectations of the WEU staff and tasked the Secretary-General to make proposals to the Permanent Council to this effect.

4. Ministers welcomed the steps taken during the Portuguese Presidency of WEU to prepare the legacy of the valuable experience which WEU is able to offer in the field of crisis management. They also welcomed the arrangements put in place, in implementation of the decisions at the Luxembourg Ministerial meeting, to allow the bodies of the EU Council direct access, as required, to the expertise of the Organisation's operational structures and to WEU's work and analyses.

5. Ministers particularly welcomed the key achievements during the Portuguese Presidency:

the first-ever WEU/NATO Joint Crisis Management Exercise CMX/CRISEX 2000 held from 17 to 23 February with the participation of 30 nations and with observation by EU staffs as well as other Organizations and nations. The Exercise provided an important test of ESDI-related concepts and arrangements developed since NATO's 1996 Berlin Ministerial for handling WEU-led operations making use of NATO assets and capabilities, such as the WEU/NATO consultation arrangements and framework document. Ministers also welcomed the report presented by the Presidency and approved by WEU nations on this Exercise, which contributes to draw useful lessons regarding the practicalities of WEU/NATO interaction for a WEU-led operation using NATO assets and capabilities:

the transmission to the European Union, for whatever use the EU may consider appropriate, of a package of WEU politico-military concepts. This package reflects a part of the legacy of a decade of experience, which WEU is able to transmit to the EU in the field of crisis management;

the continuation of the informal reflection on security and defence in Europe through the seminar held on 27 January involving Directors for Security Policy from Foreign and Defence Ministries, and the transmission of the Presidency's written report to the EU;

the WEU-EU workshop held on 11 April addressing the politico-military issues associated with the various phases of a possible European-led humanitarian mission, which allowed the presentation and explanation of many relevant aspects of the experience acquired by WEU;

the organisation by the Presidency of the Mediterranean Seminar on Conflict Prevention held on 14 and 15 February and the subsequent preparation and separate transmission to the EU of the elements for a reflection on the WEU contribution to the Barcelona Process. This document reflects the work done in the context of the WEU Mediterranean dialogue and aims at contributing to overall thinking in the EU on Mediterranean issues;

the preparation and the separate transmission to the EU of the Document on WEU's experience on African Peacekeeping, which includes a chronology of activities, an assessment, and the appropriate lessons learned concerning the potential role of a European multinational organisation in this field.

6. Concerning WEU operations, Ministers expressed their satisfaction with:

the work of the extended Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPEXT) and considered it an effective contribution to the establishment of a viable police force in Albania according to European norms. They welcomed the intention by the EU to extend further the mission under its present mandate until 31 December 2000 and requested the Permanent Council to take the necessary decisions as appropriate;

the extension of the Western European Union Demining Assistance Mission to the Republic of Croatia (WEUDAM) mandate for one year, until 9 May 2001, and expressed their appreciation for Sweden's leading role in this mission, conducted by WEU at the request of the EU. In this connection, Ministers welcomed the EU's intention to support the WEUDAM/CROMAC request for a Geographic Information System on Croatia to be executed by the WEU Satellite Centre.

7. Ministers noted the WEU Exercise Programme and, in this context, welcomed the preparation of a Joint WEU/NATO Exercise Study, to take place in the Netherlands in June 2001, which aims at enhancing interoperability and developing joint WEU-NATO procedures for establishing and operating an OHQ in the context of a WEU-led CJTF-related operation using NATO assets and capabilities.

8. Ministers noted with interest the report by the Presidency on the Military Committee meeting held in Lisbon on 13 and 14 April. They welcomed the approval of the WEU Host Nation Support Concept and the Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) for WEU fact finding missions and civil-military co-operation.

9. Ministers welcomed the approval of the WEU framework for drafting a document on the status of forces to be used in the event of WEU operations, which does not impose a model for such arrangements but provides a useful framework to assist and guide case-by-case decisions. They noted its transmission to the EU.

10. Concerning the possible WEU participation in a developing multinational European programme in the satellite field, Ministers noted the progress report on the mid-term concept for improving access to satellite imagery. In this context, Ministers welcomed WEU's intensified relations with the European Union in space-related work during the Portuguese Presidency. They noted the approval of the Rules of Application of the MOU on supply of Helios products to WEU.

11. Ministers welcomed the organisation by the Italian and British authorities of the visits of the WEU Permanent Council to the HQs of EUROFOR and the ARRC respectively. They provided timely opportunities to assess the co-operation and ability of forces of European countries to function at a joint level.

12. Ministers welcomed the forthcoming EOLO 2000 Exercise that will test a Peace Support Operation under the control of a combined joint HQ, deploying significant air, sea and land forces (over 12,000 troops), from the four EUROFOR/EUROMARFOR countries, plus Greece and Turkey for the naval part, aiming at improving operational readiness including interoperability of systems and procedures.

They noted the ongoing efforts of EUROFOR participating States to strengthen EUROFOR capabilities and welcomed the fact that the force is operational.

13. Ministers welcomed the measures adopted at the end of 1999 by the five Eurocorps member nations within the framework of implementation of the Cologne decision to adapt the Eurocorps, and in particular its Headquarters, to the new strategic environment and to develop it into a European rapid reaction corps available for actions by the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance. Ministers welcomed the possibility offered to their European partners by the five Eurocorps nations to take part in Eurocorps activities and possible operations, and also to place liaison officers in the Eurocorps Headquarters at Strasbourg.

They welcomed the commitment of the Headquarters of this large European multinational unit as the nucleus for the KFOR III Headquarters. This commitment demonstrates that implementation of the decisions taken by the European Union at Cologne and Helsinki, with regard to the strengthening of European defence capabilities, is contributing to the credibility of the European security and defence policy and the vitality of the Atlantic Alliance.

14. Ministers reiterated the importance they attached to the dialogue and co-operation which WEU has developed with the Russian Federation over recent years. Recalling Ukraine's significance as an important European partner, they also highlighted WEU's dialogue and co-operation with Ukraine which has notably been pursued through the Action Plan agreed last June.
15. Ministers welcomed the ratification by Ukraine of the Open Skies Treaty. They called on Russia and Belarus to ratify the Open Skies Treaty without delay. They encouraged the continuation of the initiatives taken in this respect by the WEU nations.
16. Ministers welcomed the ratification by the Russian Federation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and START II.
17. Ministers expressed their concern regarding human rights violations in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation and underlined the urgency of a satisfactory response to these concerns.
18. Ministers welcomed the progress made by Croatia on the road to democracy and in meeting its international obligations, particularly under the Dayton and Paris Agreements.
19. Ministers reiterated the necessity for real progress towards democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.
20. Ministers took note with appreciation of the ongoing dialogue between Cyprus* and WEU that evolves in line with the development of Cyprus's links with the European Union, with which negotiations for accession are continuing.
21. Ministers thanked the French Chair of the Transatlantic Forum for the successful development of its programme.
22. Ministers noted the initial steps undertaken by the OSCE in order to implement the decisions taken at its Istanbul Summit last November, including its Platform for Co-operative Security. They welcomed in particular developments towards the realization of the REACT concept, "Rapid Experts Assistance and Co-operation Teams", and the increase of students and graduates of the OSCE Kosovo Police Service School. They agreed that, based upon the outcome of a recently held OSCE seminar on small arms and light weapons in Vienna, the OSCE was well placed to continue efforts for the elaboration and adoption this autumn, of a comprehensive document on small arms and light weapons to combat the illicit trafficking and the destabilising accumulation and spread of these weapons.

* Turkey dissociates itself from this reference by reserving its stated position on this issue.

23. Ministers welcomed the election of Mr. Klaus Bühler as President of the WEU Assembly and paid tribute to the work of the outgoing President Lluís Maria de Puig. Ministers acknowledged the substantial contribution of the WEU Assembly to the debate on European security and defence. In this context, they noted its recent Lisbon Initiative.

24. Ministers welcomed the statement presented by France on the programme for its forthcoming Presidency of WEU.

ARMAMENTS COOPERATION

1. WEAG Defence Ministers held a special meeting on 15 May primarily to further discuss the issue of the future of WEAG and WEAO in the evolving European security architecture, as they had decided to do at their meeting in Luxembourg in November last year.
2. As a result of the WEAG Ministers' agreement in Luxembourg to extend participation in WEAG activities to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, their meeting on 15 May was attended by Ministers from 19 nations. In this context Ministers warmly welcomed their colleagues from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, who were attending a WEAG Ministerial for the first time.
3. Ministers noted the statements by Austria and Finland presenting their applications for full membership of WEAG and tasked NADs to implement the related procedures which they had agreed at their meeting in Luxembourg.
4. Ministers had a fruitful exchange of views on the issue of the future of WEAG and WEAO, aiming to provide guidance for the conduct of further studies. They endorsed the NADs' proposals on the way ahead and:

confirmed that WEAG and WEAO have a role to play in the evolution of European armaments policy;
decided to maintain WEAG as well as WEAO in their present form, for the time being, continuing to make use of the provisions of the Modified Brussels Treaty and the associated Paris Agreements;
tasked NADs to commence work on examining the practical issues necessary to assure the immediate future of WEAG and WEAO, consulting with other bodies as necessary, and to provide them with an initial report at their next meeting together with a phased work plan for further in-depth studies on the long term future of WEAG and WEAO including their constructive role in and contribution to European armaments policy, aimed at maximising armaments cooperation and minimising costs. The issues to be studied should include, inter alia, aims, functions and organisation taking into account the political and institutional framework for future European armaments cooperation. The work plan should be a flexible one and should describe a step-by-step approach. Following the initial report in Autumn 2000, the phased work plan would be structured towards making a final report in Autumn 2001.

5. Ministers also signed amendments to the various MoUs governing R&T cooperation under WEAG and WEAO in order to make them more workable and flexible, and to facilitate participation in R&T projects.
6. Finally, Ministers took note of the work accomplished on the establishment of the planned European Armaments Agency, which is developing in accordance with the Masterplan.
7. The WEU Council (members of WEAG) adopted the conclusions of the WEAG Defence Ministers.