

The WEU archives: discover a chapter of European defence – Conference – Presentation (Luxembourg, 17 December 2012)

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The archives of Western European Union (WEU) were the focus of an event organised jointly by the CVCE and the Luxembourg National Archives on 17 December 2012.

At this event, André Dumoulin of the École Royale Militaire in Brussels and lecturer at the University of Liège gave a lecture entitled 'Western European Union: Witness, symbol and victim of a nascent Europe of security and defence'.

It was on 23 October 1954 in Paris that the five Member States of Western Union (France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg), together with Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), signed the Protocol Modifying and Completing the Brussels Treaty of 1948, thereby establishing Western European Union. The new treaty conferred powers on WEU in the economic, social and cultural fields but also, and in particular, in the areas of armaments and security and defence.

On 30 June 2011, Western European Union ceased to exist.

A few months before the dissolution of WEU in 2011, the WEU Permanent Council welcomed the Luxembourg Government's proposal to host the WEU archives and to use them for research purposes. The organisation's archives were transferred to the Luxembourg National Archives and the CVCE was given the task of exploiting these holdings for research. Some 800 linear metres of historically significant material have been transported from Paris and Brussels to Luxembourg. The National Archives are now responsible for conserving these documents and making them accessible.

In 2009, the CVCE published a research corpus on Western European Union (available at <http://www.cvce.eu/recherche/corpus>) which sheds light on this first European security and mutual defence organisation. Following this initial work, and in response to the task it has been given, the CVCE will be carefully consulting the WEU archives, now stored at the Luxembourg National Archives, for a research project that will look at new issues in the area of European security and defence.