

WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

WEU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Bonn, 18 November 1991

COMMUNIQUE

1. At their regular meeting in Bonn on 18 November 1991, the Foreign and Defence Ministers of WEU member States issued a declaration on Yugoslavia (annexed).

2. Role and place of WEU in the security architecture

In the run-up to the meeting of the European Council in Maastricht, Ministers discussed in depth the place and the specific role of WEU in the future European security architecture. They underlined the great importance of shaping the security and defence dimension of the European unification process. Ministers noted with satisfaction that, in the Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation and through the adoption of a new strategic concept, the Heads of State and Government of the Atlantic Alliance, meeting on 7 and 8 November 1991, had taken far-reaching decisions which will also give strong impetus to the development of the European security and defence identity.

Ministers reiterated the objective of developing WEU as the defence component of the European unification process and as a means of strengthening the European pillar within the Alliance. They were able to bring closer their positions, in particular on three points

future role and specific tasks of WEU;

definition of WEU's future relationship with the the European Union;

transparency and complementarity between European security and defence identity and the Atlantic Alliance.

Ministers decided to charge the Special Working Group of WEU to complete their work on this subject before the next Conclave of the EC Foreign Ministers on 2 December

In the light of ongoing discussions, the Presidency will decide, if necessary, on an additional extraordinary Ministerial meeting

3. Relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe

Ministers reaffirmed their intention to help consolidate peace and stability in Europe by enhancing the dialogue on security and cooperation between WEU and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic States and the Soviet Union. They considered the measures undertaken since April 1990, and particularly since the meeting of the Council in Vianden in June 1991 to be constructive steps in this direction.

Ministers resolved that the next measures should be as follows

the Foreign and Defence Ministers of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania will be invited to participate in a special meeting with the members of the Council;

seminars in these countries organized by the WEU Institute for Security Studies;

expansion of the WEU Institute scholarship programme;

fact-finding visits by the Presidency and Secretary-General to the Soviet Union and to the Baltic States, if the latter are interested

The further development of this relationship will be decided in the light of decisions to be taken about the future role of WEU.

Ministers expressed the conviction that these measures envisaged by WEU and the similar endeavours by the Atlantic Alliance and the European Community are mutually complementary and reinforcing.

4. Operational cooperation among member States

In the field of space

With the aim of intensifying space cooperation within WEU, and to give substance to the resolutions made at their last regular meeting in Vianden (Luxembourg) Ministers decided that the satellite data interpretation and training centre should be established in Spain with effect from

January 1992. They agreed that a British national will be appointed as Director of this Centre for a period of 3 years.

Ministers also decided that a study group should be formed in 1992 to examine the necessity and desirability of a medium- and long-term realization of a European space-based observation system. This group will be based in France and have an Italian chairman

In the military field

Ministers noted studies submitted by the working group consisting of representatives of the defence ministries in association with the WEU Special Working Group on the operational organization of cooperation within WEU both in the politico-military field and in the military field. They mandated the groups to pursue their studies further in the light of the results of the forthcoming European summit in Maastricht.

In the field of arms control verification

Ministers took note of the progress made on cooperation among member States on the verification of arms control agreements. In this context, they underlined the link between space cooperation and arms control verification, including verification of the CFE Treaty

Ministers noted with approval the preparatory steps taken to set up multinational inspection teams as part of the implementation of the verification regime laid down in the CFE Treaty. They approved a set of rules for the cooperation of multinational teams.

They decided to take into account in their subsequent deliberations the possibility of cooperation with all CSCE member States

The Council welcomed the progress made following the resumption of the "Open Skies" negotiations in Vienna, which gives hope for their successful conclusion by the time of the Helsinki follow-up meeting. The Ministers continue to attach great importance to accelerating the search for cost-effective solutions in the implementation of an "Open Skies" agreement

5. Security in the Mediterranean

Ministers took note of the report by the Secretary-General of WEU on the work of the Mediterranean Sub-Group. They asked the Sub-Group to address in its future studies the question of developing contacts between WEU and the Maghreb States.