



# Assembly of Western European Union

DOCUMENT 1414

4th May 1994

FORTIETH ORDINARY SESSION

(First Part)

## Parliamentary co-operation with the countries of the WEU Forum of Consultation

### REPORT

submitted on behalf of the Defence Committee for  
Parliamentary and Public Relations  
by Sir Russell Johnston, Rapporteur



*Parliamentary co-operation with the countries  
of the WEU Forum of Consultation*

**REPORT <sup>1</sup>**

*submitted on behalf of the Committee for Parliamentary and Public Relations <sup>2</sup>  
by Sir Russell Johnston, Rapporteur*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DRAFT ORDER

on parliamentary co-operation with the countries of the WEU Forum of Consultation

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

on parliamentary co-operation with the countries of the WEU Forum of Consultation

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

submitted by Sir Russell Johnston, Rapporteur

- I. Introduction
- II. The WEU Forum of Consultation: aims and prospects
  - (i) The Forum of Consultation, structure of political contacts on defence and security questions with the states of Central Europe
  - (ii) Present position and future prospects
- III. Parliamentary co-operation with the countries of the WEU Forum of Consultation
  - (i) National parliamentary co-operation
  - (ii) Multilateral co-operation
- IV. Conclusion

---

1. Adopted unanimously by the committee.

2. *Members of the committee:* Mr. Tummers (Alternate: *Eisma*) Chairman; Mrs Fischer, Sir John Hunt (Vice-Chairmen); MM. Amaral, Birraux, Bonrepaux, Bühler, Caldoro (Alternate: *Paire*), Colombo, Decagny, Sir Anthony Durant, Mrs Err, MM. Eversdijk, Ghesquière, Dr. Godman, Mr. Gouteyron, Sir *Russell Johnston*, MM. Kempinaire, Martins, *Pfuhl*, Reimann, Robles Fraga (Alternate: *Ramirez Peri*), Rodotà, Sainz Garcia, Mrs. Sanchez de Miguel, Mr. Tabladini.

N.B. *The names of those taking part in the vote are printed in italics.*

***Draft Order***

***on parliamentary co-operation with the countries of the WEU Forum of Consultation***

The Assembly,

- (i) Recalling Order 86 instructing the Presidential Committee:
  - (a) to encourage visits by Assembly committees to Central European countries, particularly when they prepare reports concerning that region;
  - (b) to promote the Assembly's participation in symposia and any other type of meeting at which parliamentarians are present that might be organised by those countries;
  - (c) to send Assembly documentation and other publications to the largest possible number of interested persons and institutions in Central European countries;
  - (d) to arrange for parliaments, governments and specialised institutions and associations in those countries to send the Assembly any documents and information they consider useful in order to ensure a better knowledge and greater understanding of their opinions, aims and decisions;
- (ii) Stressing the importance of the maintenance and development of relations with the parliaments of the countries of the Forum of Consultation;
- (iii) Conscious of the economic difficulties faced by these countries which are hindering more active co-operation with the WEU Assembly;
- (iv) Considering that more intensive co-operation between the WEU Assembly and the Central European parliaments constitutes an important element in the process of integration of these countries in the structures of European political and defence co-operation,

**INSTRUCTS ITS COMMITTEE ON BUDGETARY AFFAIRS AND ADMINISTRATION**

To include in the Assembly's budget for the 1995 financial year a provision for setting up an Assembly support fund for parliamentary co-operation work with the countries of the WEU Forum of Consultation.

***Draft Recommendation******on parliamentary co-operation with the countries of the WEU Forum of Consultation***

The Assembly,

- (i) Recalling Recommendations 528, 547 and 548 requesting the Council to:
- (a) fulfil the expectations of the Central European states by regular and relevant dialogue, duly organising discussions on topical questions, and including the states of Central Europe in appropriate seminars to provide an opportunity for debate on subjects of mutual interest;
  - (b) ensure that consultations held with the Central European states at Ministerial Council and WEU Permanent Council/Ambassador level and meetings of senior officials or seminars organised by the Institute for Security Studies are included in the annual report to the Assembly;
  - (c) establish WEU information points in the capitals of the Central European states;
  - (d) develop WEU's relations with the countries of the Forum of Consultation by seeking greater cohesion with the work of the European Union in Central and Eastern Europe and intensify the work of the Forum of Consultation giving it a structured programme of work, encompassing, inter alia, joint development of risk and threat assessment;
- (ii) Stressing the importance for peace and stability in Europe of the consolidation of democratic structures and the success of economic reforms in the countries of the WEU Forum of Consultation;
- (iii) Warmly welcoming the Council's decisions to associate the consultation partners more closely in the work of WEU;
- (iv) Welcoming the signature by several countries, members of the Forum of Consultation, of Europe agreements with the European Union and wishing all members of the Forum of Consultation to become party to such agreements;
- (v) Stressing the importance, repeatedly confirmed in the Council's declarations, of the development of relations and co-operation between the WEU Assembly and the parliaments of the member states of the Forum of Consultation with a view to integrating these countries into European political and security structures,

**RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL**

1. Keep the Assembly regularly informed on the activities of the Forum of Consultation and of decisions taken at meetings of the latter at ministerial and Permanent Council level and in the Counsellors' Group;
2. Invite the Assembly to participate on a regular basis in symposia and seminars on subjects of common interest to WEU and the Forum of Consultation, organised by WEU or by the Institute for Security Studies;
3. Ensure that the Assembly has adequate means to develop relations and co-operation with the states of the Forum of Consultation, in accordance with the Council's own expressed wish.

## *Explanatory Memorandum*

*(submitted by Sir Russell Johnston, Rapporteur)*

### *I. Introduction*

1. The recent NATO summit meeting held in Brussels on 10th and 11th January 1994 devoted much of its work to the development of relations between NATO and the states of Central and Eastern Europe.

2. The adoption of the partnership for peace programme made it possible to progress from informal contacts and exchanges of views to firm co-operation in a very sensitive area for the states of Central and Eastern Europe, i.e. that of defence and security.

3. Over and above the politico-military aspects of this programme and the questions it raises regarding its practical application and the consequences for the geopolitical balance in the region – some states considered this to be a first step towards joining NATO in the medium term, others believed it fell short of expectations – the adoption of this document shows that the politico-military situation in this part of the continent is still unstable and the end of the cold war has not put an end to tension in the area.

4. Political differences, armed conflict, ethnic fighting, civil war, internal instability and difficulties encountered in applying economic reforms, all these events help to prevent the creation of a stable and prosperous regional environment in which co-operation and diplomacy would replace distrust and hostility.

5. It is with a view to helping countries to overcome their fears and foster co-operation in security and defence matters that NATO decided in Rome on 8th November 1991 to create the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC) and the WEU Council decided at the Petersberg meeting of its Council of Ministers on 19th June 1992 to create the Forum of Consultation destined to promote contacts between the countries of Central Europe (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) and WEU.

6. Among the various decisions reached at the meeting of the Council of Ministers with the states of Central Europe, one concerned the WEU Assembly directly, to quote the words of paragraph 8 of the declaration issued after that meeting: "Ministers advocated the development of relations between the WEU Assembly and the parliaments of the states concerned". This ques-

tion has already been the subject of a report from this committee presented at the June 1993 session<sup>1</sup>.

7. The reference to parliamentary co-operation is of particular importance here because it is a matter often forgotten when tackling the question of co-operation with the states of Central Europe. In the countries concerned, parliament plays a primordial rôle in reaching political decisions, sometimes to a far greater extent than that played by parliaments in the countries of Western Europe.

8. Furthermore, the party system and the instability of political alliances which constitute the basis of government in several countries give parliaments a right to know and to join in decisions which is far from negligible with regard to the political options of governments in every field of activity. Hence the need for developing co-operation with the parliaments of Central Europe in the various areas of parliamentary activity, be it at the level of exchanging information or of technical assistance (training of officials in parliaments, introduction of communications networks and the exchange of data).

9. This helps to improve the working of parliamentary institutions and consequently the stability of democratic institutions in the countries concerned. Furthermore, the exchange of information fosters better understanding of situations and problems specific to each country and each area in important matters such as foreign policy, defence and security, since the parliaments echo the various national political feelings which at any time may influence the direction of state affairs.

10. Today, parliamentary co-operation is a responsibility of the national parliaments which act in accordance with national priorities leading towards contacts with one parliament or another depending on the views held regarding the countries concerned. Various institutions handle these questions at European level, from the WEU Assembly to the parliamentary Assembly of the CSCE, according to the possibilities and aims of each one.

11. While approaches may diverge in regard to substance and form, the fact remains that parliamentary co-operation with the countries of Central Europe helps to create an atmosphere of

<sup>1</sup> The development of relations between the WEU Assembly and the parliaments of Central European countries, Document 1365, Rapporteur: Mr. Kempinaire.

confidence and understanding, promoting a feeling of security in the region and giving it, in part, the stability it needs for prosperous and peaceful development.

## *II. The WEU Forum of Consultation: aims and prospects*

12. Created in June 1992 at the meeting of the WEU Council of Ministers at Petersberg in Germany, the WEU Forum of Consultation seems to be the practical consequence of the decision taken at the meeting of the Council in Brussels on 23rd April 1990<sup>2</sup>.

13. According to paragraph 8 of the communiqué issued after that meeting, "Ministers agreed on the opportuneness of establishing contacts for two-way information with the democratically-elected governments in Central and Eastern Europe... Ministers recognised that, by virtue of its activities, the parliamentary Assembly of WEU has an important rôle to play in opening up contacts between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe."

14. Two years later, and in an attempt to respond more specifically to the concern shown by the countries of Central Europe in regard to an increasingly unstable regional environment (war in former Yugoslavia, fighting in the Caucasus, differences between Russia and Ukraine concerning nuclear weapons and the Black Sea fleet, political instability in Russia), the WEU Council of Ministers decided, at a meeting with states of Central Europe, that "a Forum of Consultation will be established between the WEU Permanent Council and the ambassadors of the countries concerned. It will meet at the seat of the WEU Council at least twice a year."<sup>3</sup>

15. After Petersberg, there came a stage of contacts for information purposes and contacts of a political nature concerning questions of defence and security between WEU and the countries of Central Europe set in the broader context of developing the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and logically following the building of the European Union in accordance with the principles laid down in the Maastricht Treaty with which WEU is associated<sup>4</sup>.

2. Document 1352, "Information letter on the activities of the intergovernmental organs, Annex V, chronology of main decisions and activities concerning WEU's relations with countries of Central Europe up to October 1992.

3. Document 1322, Extraordinary meeting of the WEU Council of Ministers with states of Central Europe, Bonn, 19th June 1992, paragraph 7 (2).

4. Document 1315, Annex 3, Declaration of the member states of WEU on the rôle of Western European Union and its relations with the European Union and with the Atlantic Alliance; Maastricht, 10th December 1992.

16. Today, following the NATO summit meeting and decisions regarding the partnership for peace programme, the Forum of Consultation has been confirmed as the point of political contact between the states of Central Europe and WEU and through this organisation between these states and the European Union in security and defence matters.

(i) *The Forum of Consultation, structure of political contacts on defence and security questions with the states of Central Europe*

17. Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the declaration issued after the meeting of the Council with the states of Central Europe in Bonn on 19th June 1992 defined fairly clearly the framework in which the Forum of Consultation acts as a structure for political contacts with the states concerned, WEU and the European Union:

– paragraph 5: The enhancement of WEU's relations with the states of Central Europe "should reflect the specific relations which exist and are developing between these countries and the European Union and its member states. Other appropriate forms of co-operation could be set up as required in the light of the development of these relations."

– paragraph 6: "Ministers had a detailed exchange of views on the development of co-operation between WEU and these states [of Central Europe]. They agreed to strengthen existing relations by structuring the dialogue, consultations and co-operation."

18. "The focus of consultations will be the security architecture and stability in Europe, the future development of the CSCE, arms control and disarmament... Developments in Europe and neighbouring regions will be of particular interest to the participants."

19. "In this way, WEU's Central European partners will be able to acquaint themselves with the future security and defence policy of the European Union and find new opportunities to co-operate with the defence component of the Union and with the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance as these develop."

20. Unlike NACC, which has become the framework for an exchange of information between the members of NATO and all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (including the new states of Central Asia emerging from the former USSR), the Forum of Consultation, by turning only to the countries of Central Europe, gives preference to political co-operation and, in the last resort, integration, by associating these countries with the process of developing the European Union.

21. This nevertheless remains a long-term project even if the adoption of the NATO partnership for peace programme may result in the countries of Central Europe showing greater interest in the Forum.

22. In fact, the countries of Central Europe are trying, each in its own way, to integrate, to the best of their ability, in the structures of the West which they feel offer them the best guarantees for their security and development: NATO and the European Union.

23. Where NATO is concerned, enlargement in the direction of the countries of Central Europe has been adjourned in favour of a programme of contacts and military exchanges (joint manoeuvres, establishment of joint military procedures, transparency of defence budgets, etc.) i.e. the partnership for peace. While marking a considerable step forward compared with NACC, the new programme fell short of the expectations of some countries and in particular the Visegrad group (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). In addition, the cost of taking part in partnership activities has to be borne by each state, which is a handicap for countries experiencing economic difficulties.

24. In its approach to the countries of Central Europe, the European Union elected to follow the course of association agreements, known as Europe agreements<sup>5</sup>. These are agreements for associating each country in the region with the European Union, particularly in the economic field. They include political aspects, however, which are worthy of attention.

25. The first five articles of each Europe agreement<sup>6</sup> are mainly concerned with political co-operation in the framework of the association thus formed.

- Article 1 defines the aims of the association as being to create the framework for the political dialogue between the parties in order to allow the development of close political relations [Article 1 (1)] and to establish new political and practical rules capable of forming the basis for the integration (of the country concerned by the agreement) with the European Union [Article 1 (4)].

- Articles 2, 3, 4 and 5 concern the political dialogue:

- (a) Article 2 stipulates that the political component and the economic component of the agreement are closely linked and

5. The Europe agreements with Hungary and Poland came into force on 1st February 1994. The general and political provisions are similar in the two texts. Agreement with Romania is in the process of ratification.

6. For example, the Europe agreement with Hungary.

constitute complementary elements of the association; the purpose of these components is to promote mutual understanding and the rapprochement of positions on international questions; they will help to harmonise positions on security matters and will strengthen security and stability in Europe [Articles 2 (1), 2 and 4].

(b) Article 3 establishes a council of association at ministerial level, which is responsible for examining all questions the contracting parties may submit to it [Article 3 (2)].

(c) Article 4 concerns the machinery for the various forms of political dialogue: contacts at the highest level, between senior officials, within multilateral authorities (UN, CSCE, for example), through the exchange of information on European political co-operation and on the policy of the country concerned by the agreement, etc.

(d) Article 5 establishes a parliamentary committee of association composed of members of the European Parliament and of the parliament of the associated country. This committee is responsible for the political dialogue between parliaments.

26. Association involves a ten-year transitional period, divided into two successive parts of five years. The first part starts on the date of entry into force of the agreement. Although these agreements do not fix a date for possible accession to European Union, they pave the way for the development of political contacts on economic questions and also questions of European common foreign and security policy (CFSP). The political provisions of the Europe agreements concord with the terms of paragraph 6 of the statement made following the meeting of the WEU Council of Ministers with countries of Central Europe in Bonn on 19th June 1992.

27. The NATO summit meeting and the adoption of the partnership for peace programme give the impression that the sharing out of tasks would tend to favour the countries of Central Europe. The European Union handles economic questions and foreign policy and security matters; NATO politico-military co-operation in the widest sense<sup>7</sup>; and WEU, through the Forum of Consultation, questions of European defence.

28. Due to its dual identity as defence component of the European Union and European pillar

7. It should even so be noted that NACC and the partnership for peace programme concern all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia, which inevitably raises problems with the Baltic countries and those of Central Europe.



of the alliance, WEU is in a pivotal position between the countries of Central Europe on the one hand, the European Union and NATO on the other, the Forum of Consultation being the point of contact between the parties concerned<sup>8</sup>.

(ii) *Present position and future prospects*

29. Two years is too short a time to be able to pass judgment on the working of the Forum. Through its work, however, and the decisions taken by the Council of Ministers in that respect, a brief review may be made in an attempt to determine what its future development may be.

30. The first meeting of the Forum of Consultation between the members of the Permanent Council of WEU and the heads of diplomatic missions of the countries of Central Europe in London was held in that city on 14th October 1992<sup>9</sup>. The communiqué<sup>10</sup> issued after that meeting was brief, emphasising that this was the first meeting of the WEU Forum of Consultation and an exchange of views was held on questions of common concern. The information letter on the activities of the intergovernmental organs of WEU for the period 20th June – 19th November 1992<sup>11</sup> refers briefly to the meeting, specifying that the questions discussed included the development of the CSCE, the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic countries and the conflicts in former Yugoslavia.

31. The second meeting of the Forum was held in Brussels on 20th April 1993 at ambassadorial level. This meeting was set in the framework of preparation for the meeting of the Forum of Consultation at ministerial level in Rome on 20th May. According to information provided by the Council<sup>12</sup>, discussions were held on the development of relations between WEU and its consultation partners, the situation in former Yugoslavia and the questions the ministers might discuss in Rome.

32. In Rome on 20th May, the first meeting was held at ministerial level between the enlarged WEU Council including, in addition to the nine members, Greece (future member), Iceland, Norway, Turkey (associate members), Denmark and

8. WEU's selective approach to the countries of Central Europe and the Baltic states alone may in the long run become more reassuring for them than the NACC framework.

9. London was then the seat of the Secretariat of the Council before it was transferred to Brussels in 1993.

10. Document 1335, Meeting of the WEU Permanent Council at ambassadorial level with colleagues of eight Central and Eastern European countries, London, 14th October 1992.

11. Document 1352, Information letter on the activities of the intergovernmental organs of WEU (20th June – 19th November 1992), 24th November 1992.

12. Document 1397, First part of the thirty-ninth annual report of the Council (1st January – 30th June 1993), 12th November 1993.

Ireland (observers) and the countries of Central Europe.

33. The ministers decided<sup>13</sup> that the term "WEU Forum of Consultation" would henceforth be extended to their annual meetings, the countries of Central Europe having become "consultation partners" (paragraph 2). The meeting also tackled the question of the situation in former Yugoslavia, questions of joint interest and the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic countries. The communiqué issued after the meeting gave a few details about the working and aims of the Forum in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9.

– paragraph 7: "... Ministers agreed that the political dialogue within the Forum of Consultation should contribute towards gaining a clearer perception of the rôle of WEU in the development of the security and the defence policy of the future European Union and should provide a framework in which security and defence issues of common concern could be discussed so as to take account of each other's views in wider fora without duplicating the co-operation in the Atlantic framework. The development of WEU's relations with its consultation partners would continue to reflect increasingly close relations between the countries of Central Europe and the future European Union and its member states ..."

– paragraph 8: Ministers decided ... "to explore and promote the possibilities for co-operating between WEU and its consultation partners in particular in the fields of conflict-prevention, crisis-management, peace-keeping and the implementation of the CSE and the Open Skies Treaties.

In particular, ministers stressed the value of an exchange of views on peace-keeping ..."

– paragraph 9: ... "Ministers agreed on the setting up of a Counsellor's Group in Brussels composed of senior representatives in the delegations of the WEU countries and the embassy counsellors of the consultation partners. This group, which would meet at least three or four times a year, would hold more detailed exchanges of view and prepare the meetings of the Forum of Consultation."

34. On reading these three paragraphs in parallel with later events, a few conclusions may be

13. Document A/WEU/DG (93) 14, Communiqué issued by the Council of Ministers and the Forum of Consultation of WEU, Rome, 19th and 20th May 1993.

drawn about the rôle and prospects of the Forum of Consultation.

35. Paragraph 7 takes up the terms of paragraphs 5 and 6 of the declaration issued after the meeting in Bonn on 19th June 1992. The development of relations with the consultation partners is now set unambiguously in the framework of working out the security and defence policy of the European Union (one might also add the foreign policy), for which policy WEU is the operational body, the decision-making body being the Council of Ministers of the European Union<sup>14</sup>.

36. The desire to avoid duplicating co-operation in the Atlantic framework concerned above all the activities developed in the framework of NACC. In the details of co-operation with consultation partners (paragraph 8) reference is twice made however to the maintenance of peace as an area of special interest whereas in NACC there is already an active ad hoc group on questions of peace-keeping<sup>15</sup>. Another more recent consequence of this reference to duplication is that with the adoption of NATO's partnership for peace programme, military co-operation with the countries of Central Europe logically becomes the task of that organisation, whereas it might be one of the tasks of WEU's military Planning Cell.

37. By declaring that the development of WEU's relations with consultation partners is linked to that of their relations with the European Union and its members, the ministers seemed to be establishing a kind of à la carte partnership depending on the status a given country has with the European Union and also in relation to the national approaches of the WEU member states towards one or other country of Central Europe. In practice, that seems to be the case as may be seen from co-operation in the framework of supervising the United Nations embargo on former Yugoslavia and the Franco-German-Polish proposal of 12th November 1993.

38. At the extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg on 5th April 1993, it was decided to afford assistance to Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania for organising customs and police operations on the Danube in order to improve enforcement of the United Nations embargo. Memoranda of understanding were signed with these states on 20th May 1993 during

14. This evolution, which started with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty is confirmed by the Petersberg declaration which defines WEU as the defence component of the European Union, may raise problems in terms of operational efficiency due to the enlargement of the Union without first laying down the basic principles of a common foreign, security and defence policy.

15. Document 1387, WEU's relations with Central and Eastern European countries, Rapporteur: Mr. Wintgens, Belgium, also drew attention to this aspect of duplication (paragraph 6).

the Rome meetings and the operation was started on 18th June. The mission involves some 240 personnel from seven WEU member states and seven patrol boats from three member states<sup>16</sup>. The Forum of Consultation was not involved in the negotiations although it would have been logical for co-operation with the Danube states to have been worked out in that body.

39. On 12th November 1993, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany, France and Poland, meeting in Warsaw, issued a declaration, paragraph 4.2 of which states:

“Given the new framework provided by ratification of the treaty on European Union, we hope to see WEU adopt an association status that should be open to the partners in the consultation that have already signed an association agreement with the European Union and, when the time comes, to those that will have signed such an agreement. Association status would make broad participation in WEU activities possible.”

40. This proposal was taken up at the meeting of the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg on 22nd November 1993: “Ministers requested the Council to reflect on an enhanced status and its content, including the Franco-German proposal<sup>17</sup> of 12th November, for those consultation partners who had already concluded or would conclude a Europe agreement with the European Union. The Permanent Council should thus identify ways and modalities to allow those countries to participate to a larger extent in the activities of WEU and to be involved in initiatives and missions as envisaged in the Petersberg declaration.”<sup>18</sup>

41. While this initiative seems logical and even a qualitative step forward in relations with the countries of Central Europe, it nevertheless gives the impression that there is a tendency towards an à la carte Forum of Consultation. Indeed, while the enhanced status may satisfy for the time being the countries that have signed the Europe agreements (the Visegrad Group plus Bulgaria and Romania), it may leave outside in the medium term the Baltic countries that have not yet signed agreements of the same type but whose security problems are more acute than those of other Forum partners. Furthermore, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mrs. Tansu Ciller, has already stated that “If some Eastern European countries are to

16. Document 1402, Communication from the Chairman-in-Office of the Council, Luxembourg, 23rd November 1993.

17. It is to be noted that the Warsaw declaration was also co-signed by Poland.

18. Document 1401, Declaration by the WEU Council of Ministers, I, paragraph 5, Luxembourg, 22nd November 1993.

gain a status approaching WEU membership ..., then Turkey's status must be changed."<sup>19</sup>.

42. The question of military co-operation is not mentioned in the texts quoted. Apart from the framework of the partnership for peace, the initiative is left, for the time being, to the member states of WEU. Thus, in 1994, the Czech Republic will take part in joint military exercises with France and the Netherlands<sup>20</sup>. It would be desirable for the enhanced status in future to include the development of this kind of exercises but in the framework of the activities of the Forum and co-ordinated by the military Planning Cell.

43. The meeting of the Forum of Consultation at ministerial level in Luxembourg on 10th May 1994 will be devoted mainly to discussion of the enhanced status and consolidation of the political and security dialogue with the consultation partners. Qualitative changes and details about the aims of the Forum are necessary if it is to be able to play a more active rôle in developing a policy of stability and security in Europe. Together with political and security matters, it will be necessary to integrate in the texts to be adopted a reference to parliamentary co-operation with the consultation partners. On defence and security questions, the WEU Assembly should play an essential rôle in the framework of parliamentary co-operation in co-ordination with other European parliamentary institutions and national parliaments.

### *III. Parliamentary co-operation with the countries of the WEU Forum of Consultation*

44. Co-operation with the new parliaments of Central Europe might seem a secondary issue when compared to the problems the region is currently experiencing and which political, economic and defence co-operation seeks to address with a greater or lesser degree of success. Nevertheless, the development of interparliamentary contacts is an essential component of the dialogue, at every level, with the Central European countries.

45. Such co-operation can take various forms, from basic information exchange to training the staff of parliament secretariats; it may take place in a bilateral framework between parliaments or in the wider context of international assemblies whose members are parliamentary representatives of different countries.

46. The links established with the parliaments of Central Europe contribute to a better perception of their problems and have the advantage of involving the various political forces in the countries of

the region, both government and opposition, in the dialogue, which political co-operation between states does not always permit. However, in order to be effective, co-operation with the parliaments of the consultation partners should be more than a simple exchange of documents, information and visits; it should have practical outcomes, not merely for the parliaments themselves, but also beyond the parliamentary framework in the political, economic and defence spheres.

47. The development of links between parliaments facilitates dialogue and exchanges of views on the problems of the region and on the solutions that might be envisaged in all of the above areas. By strengthening parliamentary links, significant contribution can be made towards enabling the Central European countries become rooted in a European environment, for the most part constructed by the member states of the European Union and other European institutions. This is a process of mutual enrichment that can considerably strengthen the stability of the continent and co-operation at every level.

#### *(i) National parliamentary co-operation*

48. The national parliaments, through their activities directed towards the Central European countries, are an essential element in the dialogue with those countries. They also contribute, by the development of parliamentary contacts and the assistance they can contribute in the various areas of parliamentary life, to political stability and a stable parliamentary régime within the countries concerned.

49. Their action, as an integral part of the overall framework of political dialogue and economic co-operation, can but encourage the consolidation of the process of political and economic reform in Central Europe and, ultimately, the geopolitical stability of the region.

50. Within the framework of national co-operation each individual parliament decides on its priorities in accordance with national interests. Taking account of these and according to available means, each parliamentary assembly chooses the ways best suited to the choices made. The spectrum of action is wide, ranging from the creation of parliamentary groups linking one parliament with another to co-operation between specialist committees in cases determined by the parliaments, through training of administrative staff and technical and information exchanges.

#### *(a) Germany*

51. The relations between the Bundestag and the parliaments of the Central European countries, members of the WEU Forum of Consultation, are of varying orders and revolve around four major

19. Atlantic News, No. 2589, page 3, 19th January 1994.

20. Le Monde, 26th January 1994.

axes: parliamentary members' groups, student exchanges, an allowance for parliamentary training and technical assistance.

52. (i) Parliamentary groups are informal groupings of members of parliament which have no formal status or specific internal rules. The fact that membership is voluntary indicates that they have a specific interest in relations with the respective partner states and their parliaments. Members of the parliamentary groups endeavour to meet as often as possible with their counterparts from the Central European countries to consider subjects and problems of interest to both parties. The results of these meetings have a useful input into the legislative process and find concrete expression in measures adopted by the Federal Government. There are parliamentary groups within the Bundestag for each of the nine countries of the Forum of Consultation.

53. (ii) In 1990 the Bundestag launched a programme of work placements for students from Central and Eastern Europe attending German universities. The aim of the programme, comprising a five-month stay in Bonn, is to provide the participants with the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Germany's parliamentary system and system of government. The participants then undertake a four-month work placement with members of parliament, parliamentary groups and the Bundestag administration. By targeting these opportunities on young university graduates with good chances of occupying positions of responsibility during their future careers, the Bundestag is seeking to strengthen future co-operation in the parliamentary sector. Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Slovak students and students from the Baltic countries have already participated in this programme. Bulgaria and Romania will also participate in the near future.

54. (iii) Within the framework of its provisions for parliamentary training, the Bundestag administration has set up a training programme for officials of the parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe. Senior parliamentary officials visit and spend time at the Bundestag, familiarising themselves with its methods of work and organisation. There is a regular, reciprocal exchange programme for officials from Poland enabling three people a year each to spend a week in the parliament of the partner country.

55. (iv) At the request of foreign parliaments, the Bundestag also provides technical assistance to a fairly limited extent with the assistance of the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs. This technical assistance basically concerns the supply of computers and other office equipment, documentation, etc.

(b) *Belgium*

56. The Belgian Senate and Chamber of Representatives have many different types of relations with their counterparts in Central Europe. From the early nineties, contacts have developed at various levels, ranging from parliamentary delegation visits to meetings between government authorities. Belgian parliamentarians have also visited Central European countries, within the framework of contacts between parliaments, on election monitoring missions (Romania, 1990) or human rights monitoring missions (Lithuania).

57. The Senate and the House of Representatives also receive parliamentary officials from Central Europe who come to familiarise themselves with the operations of the various departments of the Belgian Parliament (a Romanian official undertook a placement with the Senate, then with the Chamber in 1992; the Deputy Director of the Polish Senate's information department undertook a placement organised by the Senate in 1993).

(c) *Spain*

58. The Spanish Parliament's activities (Senate and Lower House) in interparliamentary relations were, like those of other parliaments, of varying nature and essentially to encourage information exchange, either by the provision of documentation or through visits by Spanish or Central European parliamentarians. These two-way contacts enable the Central European parliaments to become acquainted with the workings of the Spanish Parliament in various fields, ranging from legislative and legal matters to how parliamentary services operate, an example being the visit by the Secretary-General of the Spanish Senate to the Polish Senate in 1993. Members of the Spanish Senate and Lower House were also present in an observer capacity during the elections held in Romania in 1992.

(d) *France*

59. The National Assembly and Senate have a policy of active commitment in the area of parliamentary co-operation with the countries of Central Europe, members of the WEU Forum of Consultation. Within this context, the parliamentary groups put the members of the French Upper and Lower House in touch with their counterparts from Central European parliaments, thus playing a major rôle in co-operation. These contacts enable better identification of the needs of the partners and the areas where technical or other assistance might be useful to them. Through these contacts, the parliaments of Central Europe can take advantage of the advice and experience of the two houses in fields ranging from the legislative process to documentary exchange and the running of the Assembly and the Senate departments.

60. Contacts at the highest level have taken place regularly between French parliamentary delegations and those of the Central European countries, contributing to establishing a permanent dialogue and exchange of views on questions that fall outside the basic framework of parliamentary co-operation and covering such subjects as foreign policy, economics and defence. Such dialogue contributes to understanding positions on both sides on European questions and has an undoubted impact on parliamentary debates on matters concerning Central Europe and relationships between the latter and the countries of WEU. Moreover, the commitment, often on a personal basis, by French parliamentarians towards the region – illustrated by the frequent presence in former Yugoslavia of members of the French Upper and Lower Houses or on election monitoring missions to Central European countries, contributes to the French Parliament's major and essential rôle in parliamentary co-operation with the consultation partners.

(e) *Italy*

61. The Italian Parliament has a three-fold approach: study visits, interparliamentary co-operation and the organisation of seminars and meetings in co-operation with other organisations. The Lower House regularly receives delegations of parliamentarians and officials from the parliaments of Central Europe, either for contacts of a general nature or to present a specific topic (parliamentary surveys, composition and selection of delegations to international assemblies or the working of documentation services, for example).

62. Two groups have been set up within the Italian section of the Interparliamentary Union to make contact with the Central European countries and the former Soviet Republics. These groups follow the work of the parliaments in those countries and co-operate with them in various fields ranging from information exchange on parliamentary business to the organisation of study visits and training placements.

63. The Italian Parliament organises seminars and meetings in co-operation with other organisations on matters of parliamentary interest. Two seminars were held in 1993: one, in collaboration with the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation, on parliamentary archives (March 1993), the other, organised with the Strasbourg Institute for Democracy, on drafting legislation (September 1993).

(f) *Luxembourg*

64. The Luxembourg Parliament's action towards the Central European parliaments has a dual focus: co-operation between individual parliaments through parliamentary groups, bilateral contacts, sometimes accompanied by technical assistance (parliamentary documentation, infor-

mation exchange, etc.) and co-operation in the framework of the Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council bringing together parliamentarians from Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands.

65. The aim of this parliamentary institution is to co-ordinate the work of the parliaments concerned and thus strengthen political co-operation between the three states so that they can best advance their interests within the European Union and Europe in general. The Council, whose permanent secretariat is accommodated in the Belgian Parliament pursues an active policy of contact with the countries known as the "Visegrad Group" (Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Republics) and is keen to promote co-operation between the Benelux countries as a model for the states of Central Europe.

66. Through the Council, Luxembourg has a wide framework in which to pursue a policy of active co-operation with the parliaments of the Central European countries and which opens up wider possibilities than those afforded merely by bilateral co-operation. Co-operation between the Benelux countries ensures a better distribution of resources and avoids duplication, since each country provides assistance in the areas in which it is best qualified to do so. The Luxembourg Parliament can thus have a presence in the process of parliamentary co-operation with the Forum countries in a much more active and influential way than if it were to act alone.

(h) *The Netherlands*

67. The Netherlands Parliament has an active policy of information contacts with the Central European parliaments. Exchange visits take place between Dutch members of parliament and their counterparts in Central European countries, either in their capacity as members of their national parliaments or in their interparliamentary delegations. Such contacts, which take place on a regular basis or within the framework of information exchanges on legislative, statutory and even political matters, are an important factor in the development of the dialogue with the parliaments of the member countries of the Forum of Consultation. Visits by officials and exchanges of documentation also take place on a regular basis, sometimes at the specific request of a Central European parliament. It should also be noted that the Netherlands Government finances Dutch political parties within the context of developing relations with their counterparts in Central and Eastern Europe.

(i) *Portugal*

68. Parliamentary groups for the purpose of establishing friendly ties between the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal and Central European countries are the means of contact between the

Portuguese Parliament and the parliamentarians of the Forum countries, enabling both to participate in various activities involving bilateral or multilateral parliamentary co-operation. Participation in the activities of the European institutions for parliamentary co-operation: WEU Assembly, Council of Europe, etc. is, for Portuguese parliamentarians, a preferred means of contact with their Central European counterparts and such institutions are one of the frameworks best suited to the definition of areas where the Portuguese Parliament can contribute advice and assistance within the framework of parliamentary co-operation.

(j) *The United Kingdom*

69. The British Parliament undertakes various activities directed towards the parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe. In addition to traditional parliamentary contacts, delegation visits, meetings at various levels (between individual parliaments or during interparliamentary assembly sessions), the House of Commons and the House of Lords, in co-operation with public and private organisations such as the Know How Fund, the British Association for Central and Eastern Europe (BACEE), the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and the Future of Europe Trust, participate in information and training projects with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

70. In 1993, the House of Commons welcomed parliamentarians from various countries belonging to the Forum of Consultation. In their turn, British parliamentarians and officials of the House of Commons participated, with fifty Romanian parliamentarians, in a seminar on the subject of parliamentary procedure held in Bucharest. British parliamentarians also visited Bulgaria (the chairman of the committee dealing with rules of parliamentary procedure) and Slovakia.

71. The House of Lords participates in such activities together with the House of Commons and officials of the House have established informal contacts with their counterparts in Central European parliaments on various matters of common interest, such as the organisation of the work of the parliamentary committees. The Hungarian and Polish Parliaments have, for example, requested information on the work of the House of Lords committee on the European Community with a view to their participation, in an observer capacity, in the conference of parliamentary committees on European Affairs.

(ii) *Multilateral co-operation*

72. Five multilateral parliamentary institutions coexist in Europe, each with their respective spheres of action. In general terms they comple-

ment each other even if the legal texts which define their areas of activity allocate them specific areas of responsibility.

73. Three of these assemblies are of an essentially European character: the WEU Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament; the North Atlantic Assembly<sup>21</sup> and the parliamentary Assembly of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), on the one hand, are Euro-Atlantic institutions<sup>22</sup>. Of these, the WEU Assembly alone has an area of responsibility for defence and security matters based on texts that are legally binding<sup>23</sup>.

74. These institutions, despite a certain overlap in their responsibilities, in general terms act within more or less well-defined frameworks in terms of their relations with the Central European countries. However, their means are not always proportionate to the extent of their responsibilities, which does not permit a co-ordinated approach towards the Central European countries. This lack of co-ordination, and the fact that they are at times in competition, makes setting up effective parliamentary co-operation on a European scale more difficult and piecemeal and hinders the integration of these countries into existing European structures, because of the large number of these institutions and the lack of co-ordination between them.

(a) *The WEU Assembly*

75. The policy and activities of the WEU Assembly in the field of co-operation with the partners of consultation were the subject of a previous report by this committee<sup>24</sup>.

76. Since that time, the Assembly has pursued its policy of contacts with the consultation partners both at parliamentary and government level: thus Mr. Aleksandrov, Minister of Defence for Bulgaria, attended the November-December 1993 Assembly session. The Assembly also invited Mr. Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, a country which is not part of the Forum of Consultation but whose political development is crucial for the security and stability of the whole of Central Europe.

77. As to parliamentary activity, the Standing Committee of the Assembly held a meeting on 2nd December 1993 with representatives of the

21. The North Atlantic Assembly is an independent parliamentary body without official links with NATO.

22. The parliamentary Assembly of the CSCE established by the Madrid Conference on 2nd and 3rd April 1991 also includes the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia.

23. Article IX of the modified Brussels Treaty of 23rd October 1954 and Article I of the Charter of the WEU Assembly.

24. The development of relations between the WEU Assembly and the parliaments of Central European countries, Document 1365, Rapporteur: Mr. Kempinaire.

parliaments of the countries of the Forum of Consultation, who had been invited in an observer capacity to attend the debates of the thirty-ninth Assembly session. This meeting allowed the consultation partners to express their views on security and defence problems in Europe and also on developing co-operation with the Assembly.

78. In early 1994, the Presidential Committee of the Assembly was involved in the work of the symposium organised on 11th and 12th February 1994 by the Polish Sejm (parliament) on: "WEU's point of view on the security of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe". Moreover, as in previous years, the committees of the Assembly have pursued their contacts with the consultation partners at various levels (visits by rapporteurs and committees, invitations to government officials to present their policies to the Assembly).

79. The Central European parliaments also expressed their interest in co-operating more closely with the Assembly, through participation in symposia, exchanges of parliamentary documentation or, in the case of Romania, by opening an information office on WEU in collaboration with the Assembly. These initiatives and activities constitute a two-way relationship between the Assembly and the Central European parliaments and the government authorities of the Forum countries.

80. The fact remains, however, that the Assembly's relations with the consultation partners are restricted by the meagre resources available to the Assembly for developing regular activities with the Central European countries. Despite assurances in the communiqués from the Council of Ministers on the rôle of the Assembly in the process of dialogue with the Central European countries, the latter continues to manage such activities with resources that are far from commensurate with requirements<sup>25</sup>. This can only limit its rôle in the framework of parliamentary co-operation with the consultation partners and frequently means that joint action with other European parliamentary institutions directed towards the Central and Eastern European countries is conducted on a piecemeal basis.

#### (b) *The European Parliament*

81. The European Parliament's activity in the field of co-operation with parliaments, and states, of Central and Eastern Europe is substantial and wide-ranging. As a consultative rather than a controlling institution of the European Union, it would appear to be the preferred contact for Cen-

tral European countries seeking to strengthen their relations with the Union and aspiring to accession<sup>26</sup>.

82. By virtue of its status as an institution of the European Union and the means available to it, both in terms of its competences and resources, the European Parliament is present at various levels of co-operation between the Union and the Central European states, in relation to co-operation both with states and parliaments. Moreover, the opinions it provides on financial matters, especially on aid programmes to the states of Central and Eastern Europe such as PHARE (originally directed towards Poland and Hungary and subsequently extended to other states in the region) and TACIS (concerning the states of the former Soviet Union), contribute to its rôle as an essential partner in co-operation with the Forum states.

83. Since the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty on 1st November 1993, the European Parliament has been strengthened in its efforts to play a more active rôle in the development of the common foreign and security policy of the Union (CFSP). The Maastricht Treaty, Title V, Article J.7 (provisions relating to a common foreign and security policy) provides that:

"The Presidency [of the Union] shall consult the European Parliament on the main aspects and the basic choices of the common foreign and security policy and shall ensure that the views of the European Parliament are duly taken into consideration. The European Parliament shall be kept regularly informed by the Presidency and the Commission of the development of the Union's foreign and security policy."

84. Moreover, regarding co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Europe agreements linking the Union with certain Forum countries (described in the first part of the report) contain a parliamentary co-operation dimension by creating parliamentary association committees bringing together members of the European Parliament and the parliaments of the signatory countries. Parliamentary co-operation, thus institutionalised and on a basis binding in law, gives the European Parliament a capacity to act that is denied to other parliamentary institutions co-operating on a more or less informal basis and without the resources the Parliament has at its disposal.

85. The European Parliament, unlike the WEU Assembly, has no competency in defence matters and has for some years been seeking to acquire the means of acting in this area through the activi-

25. The granting of an enhanced status to the Central European countries, members of the Forum of Consultation will imply, in terms of day-to-day management, increased pressure on the logistical requirements of the Assembly. This in turn will necessitate an increase in the latter's resources which the Council has not agreed to date.

26. Hungary and Poland officially applied for membership in April 1994.

ties of its Foreign Affairs and Security Committee and was not slow initially to advocate rapprochement with the WEU Assembly – an idea already expressed in the declaration of WEU member countries on the rôle of WEU and on its relations with the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance annexed to the Maastricht Treaty and subsequently the absorption, pure and simple, of the Assembly by the European Parliament with transfer of responsibilities. This position was reiterated in a resolution of the European Parliament on the future of relations between the European Union, WEU and the Atlantic Alliance, adopted on 24th February 1994.

86. In assuming this position, which prejudices the results of the intergovernmental conferences in 1996 on the European Union and any decisions to be taken on revision of the modified Brussels Treaty in 1998, the European Parliament is making collaboration difficult between the two institutions (WEU Assembly and European Parliament), and furthermore contributing to fragmenting the effort and resources necessary for effective parliamentary co-operation with the Central European countries members of the Forum of Consultation.

(c) *The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*

87. The pan-European interparliamentary co-operation programme with Central and Eastern European parliaments<sup>27</sup> run by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe comprises two complementary aspects: information and training and co-operation in the field of legislation.

*Information and training*

88. With the aim of facilitating the integration of the delegations of Central and Eastern European countries into the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Assembly organises seminars on the structure and activities of the Council of Europe and the Assembly for the benefit of these countries. These seminars, which take place regularly (four or five times a year) bring together representatives (parliamentarians and officials) from the various Central and Eastern European countries (in groups ranging in size from several dozen to only a few people) to discuss questions of common interest in the economic and social fields and on human rights. They normally close with participation at an Assembly session.

89. Since 1993, in addition to general training activities, the Assembly of the Council of Europe has devised and funded more specific projects through the development of ad hoc programmes,

27. All the members of the WEU Forum of Consultation excepting Latvia, which still has special guest status, are full members of the Council of Europe.

in collaboration with member and beneficiary countries. These training programmes enable parliamentarians and officials from the parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe to familiarise themselves with particular aspects of the work and running of the parliaments of the member countries of the Council of Europe such as, for example, parliamentary rules or computerisation of parliamentary services.

*Interparliamentary co-operation in the legislative field*

90. In this field the Assembly has set up bilateral and multilateral projects:

- The first are run at the express demand of the beneficiary countries. Such projects might, for example, deal with drafting internal parliamentary rules and will involve participation of officials of the Office of the Clerk of the Assembly, assisted by those of the member parliaments of the member countries. Sometimes, depending on the area in question, the Assembly will draw upon the services of national experts.
- Multilateral co-operation projects are in the form of specialised symposia. The Assembly identifies in advance subject areas that might be of interest to the parliaments of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and organises specialised symposia at which parliamentarians and experts present the basic principles of the legislation of the member countries in one or other given fields (environment, social policy, public service, etc.). The discussions and exchanges of view that take place thus contribute to facilitate the integration of the parliaments of the countries concerned into the structures of Western Europe.

(d) *The North Atlantic Assembly*

91. The North Atlantic Assembly, the independent parliamentary body of NATO, began to form relations with the Central European countries as soon as democratically-elected parliaments emerged within them. Initially, these contacts took a variety of different forms: visits by Assembly sub-committees to Central and Eastern Europe, participation of delegations of observers from these countries at Assembly meetings and organisation of seminars on security and defence.

92. These relations were pursued on a more formal level during the plenary session of the Assembly in London, in November 1990, when parliaments from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and the USSR were granted associate delegate status. In April and October 1991,



Romania, then the three Baltic countries, were awarded the same status.

93. In October 1991, during the thirty-seventh annual meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly it was decided to concentrate an important part of the latter's resources on assistance for the development of parliamentary democracies in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, within the framework of an initiative supported by Charlie Rose, a member of the American Congress and the then Chairman of the Assembly, and by American Senator Bill Roth. The Rose-Roth initiative is today the major component of the Assembly's strategy within the framework of co-operation with the parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe.

94. The Rose-Roth initiative was accompanied by a major four-fold effort by the Assembly: facilitating participation by parliamentarians of Central and Eastern Europe in the work of the Assembly, organising seminars on specific subjects, temporary recruitment of nationals of Central and Eastern Europe to train them in parliamentary business and development, of a North Atlantic Assembly programme of study bursaries. Owing to the lack of financial resources in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Assembly undertook to provide financial assistance for a limited period.

95. In launching such an extensive programme of activities, the North Atlantic Assembly demonstrated that it had a coherent strategy towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, designed to achieve specific objectives: providing a model for the future development of official ties between Central European and NATO countries; supplementing existing intergovernmental co-operation and aiding the countries concerned to develop democratic parliamentary structures. Moreover, the fact that this Assembly was identified with NATO in the eyes of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and the presence there of members of United States Congress are major assets contributing to the success of the parliamentary co-operation projects.

96. There is little co-ordination between the North Atlantic Assembly and the WEU Assembly, concerned as both are with defence and security problems, within the framework of parliamentary co-operation with the countries of the Forum of Consultation. The chronic lack of resources which prevents the WEU Assembly from launching initiatives on the same scale as its Atlantic counterpart is part of the reason for this, however, the absence of a European parliamentary pillar within the North Atlantic Assembly that would express WEU's point of view is also to be regretted. This absence is due in part to the fact that the membership of the national delegations to the two assemblies overlaps very little. Ultimate-

ly, it is the very effectiveness of the action in favour of the partners of the Forum that suffers most because of duplication and the lack of co-operation between the institutions concerned.

(e) *The Parliamentary Assembly of the CSCE*

97. The most recent of Europe's parliamentary institutions was created at a meeting of the parliamentary delegations participating in the CSCE held in Madrid on 2nd and 3rd April 1991. The CSCE Assembly held its first plenary session in Budapest, on 3rd July 1992. The Bureau of the Assembly is located in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the annual meetings, lasting up to five days, are held in the capitals or other towns of the member countries.

98. The organs of the Assembly<sup>28</sup>, which is made up of 312 parliamentarians, are the President, the Bureau, the Permanent Committee, the committees and the Plenary Assembly. The President, who is elected for a year, directs the work of the Assembly, the Bureau and the Permanent Committee.

99. The Bureau is made up of the President, nine Vice-Presidents and the Treasurer. It is responsible for implementing decisions of the Permanent Committee and ensuring the smooth running of the Assembly between Permanent Committee meetings.

100. The Permanent Committee prepares the work of the Assembly between sessions. It may adopt resolutions on urgent political matters and forward them to the Council of Ministers of the CSCE. The committee fixes the dates, duration and place of the annual sessions and draws up the agenda. It ratifies appointments to committees and may appoint ad hoc committees. The committee also approves the budget and appoints the director and two assistant directors of the secretariat of the Assembly.

101. There are three committees:

- Political Affairs and Security;
- Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment;
- Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions.

102. The plenary Assembly meets during the ordinary session held, over no more than five days, during the first ten days of July. It deals with questions put to the Council of Ministers of the CSCE, consideration of motions tabled by mem-

28. Sénat (France) Rapport d'information no. 275: Les activités de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la CSCE (I); Règlement de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la CSCE (II); rapporteur: M. Jacques Genton, sénateur; 22 avril 1993.

bers of the Assembly, discussion of and voting on the conclusions of committee reports.

103. Although in 1991, the creation of the parliamentary Assembly of the CSCE was a logical step, given the political context in Europe (since political and military structures in Central and Eastern Europe had disappeared, it appeared necessary to create structures to accommodate the new democracies of the continent), one might well ask today what specific rôle it has alongside other existing parliamentary structures.

104. The problems of democracy, human rights, and social and cultural policy are the responsibility of the Assembly of the Council of Europe, those of security and defence are still the responsibility of the WEU and North Atlantic Assemblies. Moreover, the scarce resources available to the CSCE Assembly are insufficient to enable the latter to play a significant rôle in parliamentary co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, it offers them a framework for discussion and contacts that is wider than that of the abovementioned institutions, if only on account of the fact that it brings together parliamentarians from 53 countries, including the United States and Canada. In this way, it too brings a modest contribution to co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

#### *IV. Conclusion*

105. Central Europe is today going through a period of radical transformation at every level: economic, social, political and defence. In spite of difficulties and national peculiarities, notions of democracy, respect for human rights and the law are an integral part of the political scene in the region and contribute to reinforcing stability and security in this part of Europe more effectively than the number of military divisions or the "security guarantees" that these countries might obtain from European and transatlantic defence organisations.

106. At the same time, the political gains of recent years are not yet sufficiently consolidated to guarantee, in themselves, the smooth progress of the new democracies towards stability and prosperity. Economic problems, ethnic issues, the persistence of a nineteenth century nationalism at the dawn of the twenty-first century and border insecurity are major obstacles to the reform process, but are not, however, insurmountable. Co-operation with other states, with regional organisations and between parliaments, is not the only remedy to the ills of the region, but it is absolutely necessary to overcome present difficulties.

107. Parliamentary co-operation, both national or multilateral with the Forum countries, contributes, albeit to a modest extent, to consolidating democracy in the region and integrating these countries into European regional structures. In a world where countries are increasingly interdependent, the security and stability of the WEU countries are closely linked with those of the Central European countries and this observation justifies the efforts that have already been made and which remain to be made in the area of parliamentary and government co-operation with the partners of the Forum of Consultation. The foundations of democracy and the market economy must be consolidated and conditions created for full integration of these countries into existing structures of European co-operation.

108. A multilateral approach is, for the Forum countries, a welcome opportunity for participating in the work of Atlantic and European political and parliamentary institutions. The WEU Assembly, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament are bringing the countries of Central Europe closer to the European Union and WEU; the North Atlantic Assembly and the parliamentary Assembly of the CSCE enable them to have contact with NATO and the United States. However here again, individual institutions act without consulting each other and it is no easy matter to try and remedy the lack of co-ordination and collaboration in the definition of objectives and to ensure an appropriate division of tasks between parliamentary assemblies. The result is a fragmentation of effort and resources and at times competition (a particular country will give more priority to contacts with the WEU Assembly, another to those with the Council of Europe and so forth).

109. The WEU Assembly has a major rôle to play in co-operation with the Forum countries in the field of parliamentary discussion on defence and security in Europe. Its competences in this area are explicitly laid down in the modified Brussels Treaty, which is not the case for other parliamentary institutions of a purely unofficial nature or which seek to encroach, despite their lack of qualifications, on its sphere of action. However, in order to act effectively, the Assembly should have a better defined brief in matters of co-operation, should be associated in the clearest way possible with the Forum activities and should have available to it appropriate means for supporting, in co-operation with the Council, the integration of partner countries into twenty-first century Europe. European parliamentary co-operation in defence and security matters will then have a proper and authoritative framework that will contribute effectively to maintaining peace and stability in Central Europe and beyond.



