

FIRST SITTING

Tuesday, 1 December 2009

1. Opening of the session

The sitting was opened at 14.35 with Mr Walter, President of the Assembly, in the Chair. The PRESIDENT – The sitting is open.

The PRESIDENT – In accordance with the provisions of Article III of the Charter of the Assembly and Rules 5 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure I declare open the 57th session of the European Security and Defence Assembly – the Assembly of Western European Union.

I ask delegates to turn off their mobile phones in the Chamber. It is discourteous to those speaking if they hear a mobile phone going off.

2. Tribute

The PRESIDENT – At the opening of our sitting, I would like to propose that we hold a minute's silence in memory of all those Europeans – men and women, those in the military and civilians – who lost their lives this year participating in military operations around the world.

The Assembly observed a minute's silence.

Thank you.

A roll of honour has been opened to commemorate those Europeans who have lost their lives in military operations around the world. You will find copies of the roll on your desks.

At the end of today's sitting we will transfer by coach at 17.45 to the Arc de Triomphe for a ceremony to rekindle the Flame of Remembrance on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I very much hope that all members, partners and observers will attend this ceremony.

3. Attendance register

The PRESIDENT – The names of those substitutes present at this sitting that have been notified to the President will be published with the list of representatives appended to the minutes of proceedings.

I have been asked to inform members about a Luxembourg initiative to create an oral history of modern Europe. There are computer terminals just outside the hemicycle where members can learn more about this initiative.

4. Examination of credentials

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the examination of credentials.

The list of newly nominated representatives and substitutes of the Assembly is published in Notice No. 1.

In accordance with paragraph 1 of Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure, the credentials have been ratified by the Speakers of the national parliaments concerned and formally communicated by those Speakers.

I welcome our new colleagues to the Assembly.

5. Associate members, partners and observers

The PRESIDENT – I welcome all colleagues present – members, associate members, partners and observers. Changes to delegations are listed in Notice No. 1.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, I invite the Assembly to ratify the credentials as appropriate of the new representatives and substitutes in each of the categories.

I would also like to welcome all of our honoured guests. Our guests include: Mr Demiris, representing the WEU Presidency, and other representatives of the WEU Council and the EU Political

and Security Committee; Mr Oliver Allen, representing the Council of the European Union; Mr Jacomet, the Head of the Secretariat in Brussels and now Acting Secretary-General of WEU; Lieutenant General Ioan of the NATO Military Committee; and chairmen and members of National Parliamentary Committees on Defence, Foreign and European Affairs.

You are all most welcome.

6. Changes in membership of committees

The PRESIDENT – In accordance with Rules 17 and 41 of the Rules of Procedure, I invite the Assembly to ratify the changes in the membership of the Standing Committee and the other committees since the end of the last session. The changes are published in Notice No. 1.

In addition, Lord Anderson is to be appointed a full member of the Committee for Parliamentary and Public Relations and Lord McIntosh is to be appointed a substitute member.

Is there any opposition? ...

The changes are agreed to.

7. Address by the President

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – Ladies and gentlemen, a year ago you elected me to be President of this Assembly. I was honoured by that mark of confidence and I hope very much that my efforts over these past 12 months will not have disappointed you.

I will not give a detailed account of the activities and achievements of our Assembly in the past year; you will find them in my annual report, copies of which are on the table outside the chamber. In all the activities I have undertaken for the Assembly, I have focused primarily on promoting the democratic scrutiny of the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, and in particular, the right of national parliamentarians to discuss these matters at an interparliamentary level in our Assembly.

I am terribly sorry for my accent. I must apologise to my French-speaking colleagues.

(The speaker continued in English)

The latest news that I am pleased to be able to give you is that this week a joint working group will be established composed of members of the Russian Council of the Federation and Duma delegation to our Assembly, with a view to reinforcing our cooperation and our mutual dialogue.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the launching of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) by EU governments at the Cologne Summit in June 1999 and there has been an avalanche of speeches and publications to mark this milestone. With the Lisbon Treaty entering into force today, I would like to use this opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts about what has been achieved and give some indications of the challenges that lie ahead.

As you will see in my annual report, this has been an extremely busy year for me and for the Assembly. Many of my meetings have held been with the consequences of the Lisbon Treaty in mind and the challenges for the Assembly and its role in the post-Lisbon world. This is very much work in progress and I anticipate an even busier year in 2010.

An important aim of the Lisbon Treaty was to further codify the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including what will henceforth be called the Common Security and Defence Policy.

For the first time, the treaty includes all aspects of the EU's external action within a common set of principles and objectives.

A keynote reform in ESDP is the double-hatting of the new High Representative, who combines the functions of the former EU Council Secretary-General, who was also the High Representative for CFSP, with those of Vice-President of the Commission in charge of external relations.

A further important innovation is “permanent structured cooperation”, which is meant to involve those member states with stronger military capabilities that are willing to enter into more binding commitments with a view to undertaking demanding crisis-management tasks.

Some experts have suggested that this permanent structured cooperation could also be the basis for a future common Union defence, based on a text similar to Article V of the modified Brussels Treaty, but I tend to think that this will not be feasible. If there is going to be a common Union defence, it will have to include all the member states from the moment of its creation, without excluding any of them.

As the second Irish referendum taught us, what the Lisbon Treaty does not include is a common defence policy; there is no territorial or strategic defence policy in the classic sense with a binding mutual assistance clause.

The Lisbon Treaty stipulates that the CSDP “shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy”, which “will lead to a common defence when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides”. In fact, as far as common defence is concerned, Article 42 of the Treaty on European Union refers specifically to NATO. That is one reason why more energy should go into improving relations between the EU and NATO and between the EU and the United States. There is no denying that the EU’s relations with NATO are still problematic, which, among other things, makes the Berlin Plus arrangement unworkable. The EU could take initiatives that might lead to a solution by granting Turkey a status comparable to that which it enjoyed as an associate member of WEU and which, to Turkey’s great regret and resentment, it was not granted in the new ESDP structures.

The EU’s relations with the United States is another important issue that needs closer attention if Europe wishes to be considered as a serious partner and ally of a country that is playing a determining role in addressing the world’s most serious problems. Indeed, bilateral EU-US relations have become significant in relation to a number of major security issues such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, the Middle East peace process and Russia, but they are usually based on ad hoc talks and lack a proper structure.

Many, if not most, EU member states have their own bilateral dialogue with the United States, often based on the presumption or pretension that they have a special relationship. I suggest not that there is no room for individual member states to conduct such bilateral dialogues, but that when it comes to cooperation in strategic matters, including security and defence, it would be far more useful and efficient and more in line with the acknowledged ambition of the Lisbon Treaty’s CFSP to create a structure for a regular, all-encompassing strategic EU-US dialogue. Such a structure is urgently needed. A precondition is that the EU must be prepared to speak with one voice. That may be a tall order, but a divided Europe will not have the strategic clout it needs if it is to be heard.

The general conclusions on ESDP, as issued by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 17 November, show that at present any progress on ESDP depends first and foremost on the activities of a plethora of expert committees and working groups. All of them are doing useful work on a vast number of detailed technical questions, but one has the feeling that the Council is reluctant to exploit to the full the bold opportunities offered by the new Lisbon Treaty, and that there is no longer any impetus to take the political leap forward that is now needed.

On the practical side, progress has recently been made in a number of areas, and I welcome the fact that regarding the flexibility and deployability of battle groups an overall agreement has now been reached among member states under the Swedish Presidency. States taking part in a battlegroup may authorise the use of an element of or a whole battlegroup in situations not involving a rapid response. That use will, however, require the unanimous agreement of all 27 member states.

The European Council has also acknowledged the growing need to ensure that civilian ESDP missions are an effective tool for crisis management and can be deployed rapidly alongside other instruments. A positive development is that member states have made progress in implementing national measures facilitating the deployment of civilian personnel. The Council has also created the integrated civil-military Crisis Management and Planning Directorate, which will be established within the European External Action Service and which is expected to give an important impetus to

improving the efficiency of ESDP operations. A logical consequence of the creation of that directorate will be to start setting up a civil-military headquarters, of which, by the way, the civilian dimension exists already.

Under the Swedish Presidency of the EU, remarkable progress has been made towards the establishment of a Europe-wide maritime surveillance system from the Northern maritime basin to the Mediterranean Sea. This system will cover a range of issues from border control to emergency response. In contrast, little progress is being made on the important question of resources. While the EU's foreign and security policy ambitions are growing, national defence budgets, which provide most of the money, personnel and equipment needed for ESDP operations, are decreasing every year.

The effects of the economic and financial crisis, which are now becoming visible, do not bode well for the armed forces, with major cuts in defence spending on equipment in 2010: minus 3% in France, minus 5% in the United Kingdom and minus 7% in Italy and Spain. Financial constraints and budget cuts should be an incentive to increase defence cooperation and further develop standardisation and interoperability. European cooperation through the European Defence Agency is part of the solution.

A report being submitted by the Assembly's Technological and Aerospace Committee welcomes the growing role of the EDA as the central organisation for shaping a European policy for defence and technological research and development programmes, but it rightly criticises the fact that, with a budget of €1 million, the agency's financial resources are lower than those of the poorest member states.

The transformation of armed forces, in allowing them to adapt to different operations, is a slow and protracted process and a number of key shortcomings must still be remedied. If member states are serious about putting flesh on the bones of ESDP, they will have to provide the appropriate financial means. The present geopolitical situation is far from reassuring: not only is the world still feeling the shock waves of a very serious financial crisis and its aftermath, but there is also an ongoing war in Afghanistan and growing tensions in a number of regions: the Middle East, large parts of Africa and in the EU's eastern neighbourhood.

In that fragile environment, it is important that ESDP is sustainable. That will depend on a joint political assessment of the challenges and threats facing the EU's member states, on their ability to identify key common interests and on member states deciding whether they want to use ESDP as the instrument to respond to these threats and challenges. The EU should now make a dedicated effort to close the gap between discourse on ESDP and how it is actually put into practice.

This Assembly's role in highlighting those challenges is unique. Each of us, in our own national parliaments, is fully aware of the constraints on all forms of public spending at present. Defence spending is never at the top of the priority list, but through our work here we know only too well what the challenges are.

(The speaker continued in French)

(Translation) – Ladies and gentlemen, we alone have the ability to see the global view on European defence matters in the context of the critical budgetary environment that is faced by the governments and parliaments of member states.

It is therefore crucial that we continue our essential work in the democratic oversight of our vital common defence and security interests.

Thank you for your attention.

(The speaker continued in English)

8. Adoption of the draft order of business

The PRESIDENT – We now turn to the draft order of business for the 57th session of the Assembly.

I propose that we adopt the draft order of business contained in Document No. C/2044 2nd Revision.

Is there any objection to adopting the draft order of business? ...

The draft order of business is adopted.

It is important that members remember to sign in at the start of each sitting this week, and collect the appropriately coloured voting card.

I also remind members who wish to ask a question to one of our guest speakers, or to speak in a debate, to sign on the relevant list at the table just outside the Chamber.

As we have a full agenda this week, rapporteurs will have a maximum of ten minutes to present their reports. Joint rapporteurs will have up to five minutes each. At the end of the debate, rapporteurs will have five minutes in total to respond. Chairmen will have up to five minutes if they wish to speak.

Other speakers in debates will normally be limited to four minutes, unless I indicate otherwise.

9. Election of Vice-Presidents of the Assembly

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the election of the remaining Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, for the current session.

I have received the following nominations for the vacant positions of Vice-President:

Mr Hauptert	(Luxembourg)
Mr Vrettos	(Greece)
Mr Moscoso del Prado Hernandez	(Spain)

The nominations have been properly made in accordance with the rules.

If there is no objection, the three candidates will be declared elected in accordance with Rule 12 (5) of the Rules of Procedure.

Is there any objection? ...

There is none.

In accordance with Rule 12 (6) the seniority of Vice-Presidents is determined by age.

10. Presiding powers for chairmen of delegations from the parliaments of EU member states

The PRESIDENT – The next item of business is the presentation of and debate on the report of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges “Presiding powers for Chairmen of Delegations from the Parliaments of EU member states”, Document 2045.

I call the rapporteur, Mr José Luis Arnaut, to present the report. He has ten minutes.

Mr ARNAUT (*Portugal*) – Thank you, Mr President. Ladies and gentleman, I will give a short explanation of why your representatives have changed the rules. Member states that are not members of WEU cannot be Vice-Presidents in our Assembly. But as they want to be more involved in the proceedings and debates of the Assembly, we wanted to give them the possibility of presiding over plenary sessions when the President or his Vice-President cannot preside. Last year, the Assembly revised its Charter and Rules of Procedure to adapt itself to the important recent changes in the European Union, in particular its enlargement and the further development of the CFSP and CSDP as now institutionalised in the Lisbon Treaty.

In particular, the new rules now enable the members of national delegations from all EU member states to participate fully in the interparliamentary debate on the EU’s security and defence policy.

Although the 2008 revision of the Rules of Procedure sought to be very accommodating towards the delegations of member states which were not signatories of the modified Brussels Treaty,

there were compelling legal reasons for maintaining some distinction between the rights of delegations of signatory and non-signatory states.

One such reason was that members of the national delegations of non-signatory states could not be elected President or Vice-President of the Assembly.

However, the revised Rules having been in force for a year, the feeling now is that, in order for the Chairmen of national delegations to be as fully involved as possible in the activities of the Assembly, they should have the opportunity of replacing the President of the Assembly when he or she is unable to preside over the debate in plenary sittings of the Assembly.

That is the proposal that we put to you today.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Arnaut.

Nobody has indicated that they wish to speak in the debate.

The PRESIDENT – We will now proceed to vote on the draft decision contained in Document 2045.

Under Rule 36 of the Rules of Procedure, if ten or more representatives or substitutes present in the Chamber so desire, the Assembly shall vote by roll-call on a draft decision.

Does any member wish to propose a vote by roll-call? ...

That is not the case. We will have a vote by show of hands.

(A vote was taken by show of hands)

The draft decision is adopted unanimously.

My thanks to Mr Arnaut who, sadly, is leaving the Assembly. He has been appointed Chairman of the Defence Committee in the Portuguese Parliament. His duties will unfortunately mean that he will not have time to join us here in our normal business, but I hope that we will see him on a number of occasions when we welcome the chairmen of national defence committees.

11. Towards a new security architecture for Europe – reply to the annual report of the Council

The PRESIDENT – The next item of business is the presentation of and debate on the report of the Political Committee “Towards a new security architecture for Europe – reply to the annual report of the Council”, Document 2053.

We will conclude the debate, and vote on the Committee’s draft recommendation, after the addresses by Mr Håkan Jevrell, State Secretary for Defence, representing the Swedish EU Presidency, Mr Theodoros Pangalos, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, representing the Greek WEU Presidency, and His Excellency Mr Vladimir Chizhov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the European Union.

We have two rapporteurs, Mr Arcadio Díaz Tejera and Mr Höfer. I understand that Mr Höfer will speak to the report on behalf of the committee.

Mr Höfer, you have up to ten minutes.

Mr HÖFER (*Germany*) (summary) thanked the President and distinguished colleagues. He noted that his introduction to the report was in many ways a natural follow-on from the President’s address. He informed the Assembly that he had visited Russia and attended meetings at its Foreign Ministry. He had discussed with representatives from the Russian Government the reasons for the initiative taken by the President of the Russian Federation to review the existing European security architecture. These discussions had shed much light on the situation.

He had discussed with the representatives Russia’s views on the OSCE, NATO, the NRC and their activities in Europe. They had talked about Russia’s strategy in international relations and explored both what that strategy was now and what it might become, and considered Russia’s attitude towards Europe and the wider community. They had considered whether this initiative might change

relations between Russia and other countries. These issues had been examined in the report and some conclusions drawn.

Russia was attempting to find a path that would bring it closer to Europe. Europe could not stop at the Urals and Russia must be viewed as an integral part of the continent. It was necessary to deal with the conflicts taking place within Europe: its security must be seen as a whole and could not be viewed in bits and pieces.

He noted that if this was true, if Europe's security was indivisible, it must be underpinned by a common set of values, as well as a common geography.

He said that he had taken part in a lively debate. Russia wanted to say goodbye to isolation and to ensure there was peace from Vladivostok to Vancouver. However, a treaty would simply be a piece of text; the Assembly would have to consider ways in which it could be effectively enforced and implemented.

He noted that Russia would no doubt be disappointed with its reputation in Europe, Canada and the United States. It wished to engage further, but so far this had happened only in advisory forums. Many questions had been asked about the NRC following the events in Georgia. The organisation had not been used effectively, but lessons had been learnt from those events.

He told the Assembly that the committee's views were set down in the report. He had tabled an additional amendment that brought the report fully up to date. While further amendments had been tabled to the report, he had seen the revised text only shortly in advance of the session and he asked that the Assembly forgive him if he did not comment on the revised text at such short notice.

He noted that this report was a first attempt to consider the issues. The draft report, rather than considering the detail of a proposed treaty, instead looked at the ramifications of such a treaty and proposed the start of a dialogue with Russia on the issues that had arisen. It considered how discussions might proceed, with whom, and what ideas might be discussed. He asked that the Assembly agree to start the dialogue, but he felt it would be premature to discuss exactly what should be covered during those talks.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Höfer, for presenting the Political Committee's excellent report. The debate on this report will be continued a little later than planned this afternoon, after we have heard addresses from a number of our guests.

***12. Address by Mr Håkan Jevrell, State Secretary for Defence,
representing the Swedish EU Presidency***

The PRESIDENT – It now gives me great pleasure to introduce the first of our guests this afternoon, Mr Håkan Jevrell, State Secretary for Defence, representing the Swedish EU Presidency.

I would like to thank you, Minister, for coming today to give the traditional debriefing by the outgoing presidency. There have been some major developments during the last few months of the Swedish Presidency, including the ratification and entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the nomination of the new President of the European Council and High Representative and the organisation of a new college of commissioners.

Sweden has not, however, let those activities overshadow the continuing day-to-day work of the EU. Under the Swedish Presidency, the ESDP has celebrated its tenth anniversary; this important policy is no longer a test case, but an integral part of the EU, and indeed it is one of the most visible areas of EU policy. This Assembly has also been busy during this period, with the help of, among others, the Swedish delegation, so ably led by Mr Björn Hamilton.

Indeed, I would like on behalf of the Assembly to thank the presidency and especially SAAB Aerospace for the very well-organised and instructive colloquy entitled "Strengthening the European defence technological and industrial base", held in Stockholm and Linköping on 29 and 30 October. The colloquy highlighted the added value and spill-over effect of defence investment, defence research and development and defence programmes for the benefit of the economy and society in general.

We welcome this opportunity to hear Sweden's views on the state of play with regard to ESDP. In your presidency, you have tackled a number of very important subjects, such as maritime surveillance and how to make the use of battlegroups much more flexible. As the country that has held the presidency during this period of transformation, you will be able to give us an interesting insider perspective on where we are and what further needs to be done. You could perhaps even share your thoughts on the future of parliamentary scrutiny of CSDP within the new framework of the Lisbon Treaty, now that it has finally been passed during your presidency.

Minister, the floor is yours.

Mr JEVRELL (*State Secretary for Defence, representing the Swedish EU Presidency*) – Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour to stand before such a distinguished audience, and I regret the fact that the Minister for Defence, Mr Sten Tolgfors, is unable to attend today.

After an intense period with plenty of hard work, the Swedish Presidency is coming to an end. I would therefore like to take the opportunity to inform you of the work that has been conducted since we assumed the presidency in July.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the European Security and Defence Policy. During the past ten years, the EU has carried out 22 missions and operations with some 70 000 personnel on four continents. Our military capacity has proven to be reliable on the ground in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, most recently, off the coast of Somalia.

Our civilian capabilities have contributed to stability and transformation in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. We have improved our resources and created new capabilities. The EU is now a real force for peace and security throughout the world.

The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty will entail a new chapter in the history of the EU's common foreign security and defence policy by further strengthening the Union's institutional framework. The establishment of the European External Action Service will enhance the efficiency of the structures for planning and the conduct of crisis management missions and operations. I will come back to this later in my speech.

We have come a long way, but challenges remain and our support is needed in an increasing number of places around the globe. There are also growing expectations within the international community of the EU's ability to deal with global crises. In order to live up to these expectations and to contribute to security in an ever-changing world, we must make the EU an even more effective actor in the global arena.

To make the EU a more effective global actor has been the overall aim of the Swedish Presidency in the field of ESDP. We have strived to identify ways to increase the usability and interoperability of existing resources and capabilities.

On defence, we have chosen to give priority to the following issues: enhancing the flexibility and usability of the EU battlegroups; to increase cooperation and coordination between different actors in the field of maritime surveillance; to increase transparency and harmonisation in the European defence industrial market to create a level playing field that enables the EU defence industry to compete in the world market; and to promote closer cooperation in civil-military capability development.

On the civilian side of ESDP, we have put the focus on moving forward on key operational issues: enhancing member states' ability to deploy civilian personnel; strengthening our ability to respond rapidly; and raising the gender perspective. In addition, we have dealt with ongoing EU operations and missions, and worked to enhance cooperation with strategic partners.

Let me refer to defence-related priorities: first, the EU battlegroups. The EU battle groups provide the EU with a robust ability to respond rapidly to crises globally. The ability to perform rapid response operations makes the Union a more credible global actor.

The EU battlegroups also serve as tools for transformation of member states' national defence. That is true not least for Sweden. Our new Defence Bill builds to a large extent on experiences from setting up the Nordic Battlegroup in 2008.

Member states have invested time, money and resources in making the concept of the battlegroups a reality. The military concept is adequate and gives the Union an ability to deploy within ten days, but we do not think there has been the corresponding political will to take such a decision within the same timeframe. So far, no battle group has ever been deployed even though there might have been situations when that was called for.

If resources are committed but never used, the European taxpayer will start to raise questions. As a consequence the future unwillingness of member states to commit resources might increase, particularly when the EU struggles to generate sufficient capabilities to ESDP missions.

The Swedish Presidency initiated a political discussion not to change the battlegroup concept but to increase the flexibility and usability of the battlegroups. We also sought to increase cooperation between the different battlegroups at the disposal of the EU. This could include the sharing of planning and lessons learned. Such synergies would also increase the usability of the battlegroups.

I am satisfied that the political discussions during our presidency have been constructive. In addition to the value of having a discussion at ministerial level, the Council has agreed guidance for a more flexible use of the EU battlegroups. The guidelines allow for elements of a battlegroup to be used under exceptional circumstances in situations of strict rapid response. The guidelines also encourage member states to cooperate more closely by setting up battlegroups.

Many areas are increasingly dependent on reliable maritime surveillance, but maritime surveillance systems and procedures remain fragmented and are not always compatible across agencies, sectors or states. The Swedish Presidency has continued the process initiated by the French Presidency to develop a solid foundation for more efficient maritime surveillance both within the EU and in ESDP operations.

The overarching principle for the ongoing work is to strive towards connecting existing systems and improving formal coordination between ongoing and future projects. The approach should be to work across sectors, pillars and borders.

In November the Council adopted conclusions that stipulate that work should be taken further towards an integrated maritime surveillance scheme. In the conclusions, the Council urges closer cooperation and coordination between all relevant actors and sectors to ensure interoperability, cost-effectiveness and efficiency. The conclusions call upon the Commission, in close cooperation with the member states and relevant EU bodies, to produce a road map for the establishment and implementation of integrated maritime surveillance before the end of 2010.

A strong European defence industry base and a well-functioning defence equipment market are crucial components in the development of European military capabilities. An open and transparent European defence market is necessary to increase the EU's competitiveness for the benefit of customers and the industry. However, the European defence industry remains fragmented and faces serious challenges in the global market.

Europe needs to improve efficiency and effectiveness in its research and procurement activities, and to ensure that member states do not compete with each other in terms of subsidies and protectionism. The EU also has to improve market efficiency and effectiveness and work towards achieving transparency and harmonisation. Sweden's vision has been to create an open European defence equipment market based on fair competition and on a level playing field, which will enable the EU's defence industries to compete on the world market.

The presidency's initiative has been warmly welcomed. Consequently, in November, Defence Ministers were able to adopt a political declaration to work towards an open and transparent European defence equipment market. The Ministers also tasked the European Defence Agency to prepare a road map for the work ahead. Thus, there is a strong political mandate to continue work on this issue.

Turning to civil-military capability and development, the EU has the ambition to take on the full spectrum of crisis management tasks. These demanding and complex tasks require a broad range of civilian and military capabilities. These capabilities have to be used in a coordinated manner. The presidency therefore saw the need further to improve coherence in civilian and military capability development. Civilian and military resources must increasingly be coordinated in order to achieve synergies in the planning, conduct and development of capabilities in support of the ESDP. Enhanced coordination and cooperation are extremely important in order to achieve a more efficient use of our resources.

During our presidency, member states have agreed to deepen the ongoing efforts to find common solutions within civil-military capability and development. A work plan will be developed in the first semester of 2010. A number of concrete areas have been identified as particularly suitable for the immediate work ahead. These include capabilities within transportation, logistics, communications and medical support, as well as security and protection.

The EU has recognised the growing need to ensure that civilian ESDP missions are able to be deployed rapidly, alongside other instruments in support of the EU's strategic aims and objectives. In this context, we have sought to move forward on a number of operational issues in order to strengthen our abilities in practice.

The first issue is member states' ability to deploy civilian personnel. Civilian ESDP missions could depend on member states' willingness to provide qualified and able personnel. Currently, there is a seriously high vacancy rate of 28%, most notably in EUPOL Afghanistan and in EULEX Kosovo. Unless we address this shortfall, the Union's credibility will be at stake. With this in mind, the European Council underlined the need for all member states to strengthen their ability to provide personnel.

A process of sharing experiences and best practice has been initiated. Considerable progress has been made by member states in enacting and implementing national measures facilitating the deployment of civilian personnel. It can be noted that several member states are adopting such national measures and strategies, and of establishing more appropriate structures. In this context, a discussion on strengthening cooperation with the justice and home affairs sector has been initiated. The Swedish Presidency strongly believes that it is key to engage the justice and home affairs sector in order to strengthen the provision of rule-of-law personnel.

The second is the strengthening of rapid response. The need to strengthen our ability to respond rapidly has been recognised by the Union, not least in the light of events in Georgia last year. During the Swedish Presidency, several decisions have been taken that together will amount to an improved ability to act swiftly. The civilian response teams – CRTs – will be enhanced and improved. The CRT pool will be doubled with a target of up to 200 experts with additional fields of expertise. More efficient procedures for decision and deployment have been adopted. The Council expects that the revised concept will lead to a higher degree of flexibility and availability of CRTs.

A decision in principle has been taken to establish a permanent capacity to store new and existing strategic material to ensure rapid deployment of equipment to new and existing missions. On a temporary basis, a warehouse will be established with EUPM Bosnia and Herzegovina by January 2010 in the view of the ongoing exploratory work on the establishment of a permanent warehousing solution.

The third is the gender perspective. A mere 11% of international staff in civilian ESDP missions are women, and more can be done to consider gender aspects when implementing a mission's mandate. This was the background for a thorough discussion that led to agreement to strengthen training on gender issues with a view to raising overall operational effectiveness of missions.

Like all previous presidencies, we have also managed ongoing EU military and civilian operations and missions. We have worked with Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Operation Atalanta off the coast of Somalia. Discussions have been ongoing concerning the possible transformation of Operation Althea to a non-executive mission. The political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and uncertainty about the timetable for the transition of the Office of the High

Representative into a border EU presence are creating insecurity about when the EU can decide on a transition of the military presence. It is imperative that a decision regarding the transition of Operation Althea is consistent with the political developments and the security situation in the country. The EU needs to be pragmatic and flexible in order to find a coherent way forward on a continued military presence in the context of the EU's broader engagement.

Discussions have been ongoing regarding the continuation of Operation Atalanta in 2010 as well as the progress of the anti-piracy efforts and cooperation with partners in the theatre of operations. In addition, further EU support to the Somali security sector has been discussed within a comprehensive EU approach to Somalia. This possible support will be part of a larger coherent framework involving close EU cooperation with the African Union, the United Nations and other relevant partners, in particular the United States. In regard to the AU, the role of AMISOM is especially important. Of fundamental importance are the transitional federal government's ownership and a clear TFG commitment to build a viable and sustainable security sector.

At the General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting last month, the Council approved a crisis management concept on a possible ESDP mission to contribute to the training of TFG security forces, and requested further planning work, without prejudging subsequent decisions on a possible ESDP mission.

In 2009, the civilian ESDP missions came of age with roughly 2 600 international personnel deployed. EULEX Kosovo, the largest mission and the only one with an executive mandate, reached full operational capability and assumed its responsibilities in Kosovo. In other regions, EU missions provided much sought after stability, in particular as observers in Georgia.

Our missions in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Palestinian territories, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea Bissau provide advice to the local authorities on police, the rule of law and the wider security sector.

An important task for any presidency is to maintain close cooperation with key partners. During the Swedish Presidency, we have pursued work further to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations, NATO and the African Union. For instance, both the United Nations, through Special Representative Kai Eide, and NATO, through Assistant Secretary General Jirí Šedivý, were invited to the informal meeting of EU Defence Ministers in Gothenburg in September, in order to allow for a comprehensive discussion on Afghanistan. NATO's Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, also participated in a joint session for Foreign and Defence Ministers at the General Affairs and External Relations Council in November, to discuss cooperation between the EU and NATO on crisis management. Once more, Afghanistan was the focus of deliberations.

Finally, let me say a few words about the Lisbon Treaty, which enters into force today. As I mentioned earlier, the treaty will strengthen the EU's common institutional framework. The new post of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, assisted by the European External Action Service, will increase the effectiveness of the EU's external actions. At the European Council meeting on 29 to 30 October, the Heads of State and Governments endorsed a report on the set-up of the EEAS. They also invited the future High Representative to present a proposal for the organisation and functioning of the EEAS as soon as possible after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The aim is to have a Council decision by the end of April at the latest.

As you are well aware, the treaty has several defence-related implications. EU Defence Ministers had a first informal discussion regarding such issues at the Council meeting in November. The discussions focused primarily on the Permanent Structured Cooperation and Article 42.7 on mutual aid in case of armed aggression. Ministers also discussed how to strengthen the role of Defence Ministers in the Common Security and Defence Policy.

To conclude, I am pleased with what has been achieved. We have taken important steps forward in making the EU's capabilities more usable and effective. That work is of importance in making the EU a more effective global actor. We have taken important steps, but work needs to continue. That is why Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence recently adopted a declaration on the future

development of the ESDP, in light of ten years of experience and the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. That declaration forms a good basis for future work.

It is important that the work carried out by the EU has broad support from EU citizens. parliamentary assemblies play a key role in securing public support for the EU's work. Therefore, may I say how much my Minister and I value your work? As the Assembly brings together representatives from all 27 EU member states, as well as those of the five non-EU European NATO members who contribute a great deal to the ESDP, you have a special role. We value your commitment to European security and defence issues.

Thank you for your attention. I will be happy to answer any questions.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you very much for that thorough report on the Swedish Presidency and for your kind words about the Assembly at the end of your address. You have agreed to answer questions, for which we thank you, and a number of members of the Assembly wish to ask questions.

I call Mr Henderson, on behalf of the Socialist Group.

Mr HENDERSON (*United Kingdom*) – Thank you, Mr President and thank you, State Secretary, for your interesting address and your hosting of the recent colloquy in Sweden, which we all found immensely important and rewarding.

I hate to be awkward, but may I raise the issue of battlegroups? Scepticism is growing throughout Europe that the battlegroups are not really fulfilling the role for which they were originally intended. Battlegroups were originally intended to be used as in the case of the Chad deployment, which was relatively small, needing 2 000 or 3 000 troops, and requiring one or two battlegroups – we know that that was not possible in that case. I was pleased to hear you mention that a more flexible approach might be taken. Would that flexibility include augmenting existing deployments by other organisations – NATO is probably the principal example? Secondly, could battlegroups be redesigned to deal with matters of a more specialist nature such as troop training or civilian-military response to a particular situation.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you.

Would you, Mr Jevrell, like to respond to that question?

Mr JEVRELL – First, may I say that discussion on the battlegroups is highly welcome, and it is obvious that we have many different views on how they should be used and when that political decision should be made? When the time comes for such deployment, one issue is funding. We have some common funding and that is one important aspect. The meeting opened up discussion of issues about the future of the battlegroups. All member states are clear that we must address and take further the issue, which we have done during our presidency. However, more political discussion is still to come on how, if we put a lot of taxpayers' money into the battlegroups, we explain to the public that we do not use them.

How the battlegroup should be used, was discussed when the Chad mission was launched. Clearly, there were different views on whether Chad was a good opportunity for such use. I want to be careful about saying exactly how it should be used in future, and what the possibilities are for relieving other operations. At least we should open the matter up for more flexible discussion and, at the same time, get deepened cooperation between the two battlegroups that stand by, to show that they provide a true instrument for the EU. I believe and hope that we will see more political agreement in future on the battlegroups. I hope that I have answered your question. Please let me know if I have missed out anything.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you for that answer, Mr Jevrell.

The next question is from Mr Santini, on behalf of the Federated Group of Christian Democrats and European Democrats.

Mr SANTINI (*Italy*) (summary) asked about the civilian dimension of foreign and defence policy, in particular the implications for justice and home affairs. He noted that peace resulted not only in a lack of war but in an absence of crime and terrorism. He said that concern had been expressed at

the outcome of the recent election in Afghanistan. He noted that the safety of citizens was very important and asked whether the greatest danger lay at home or abroad.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you. Mr Jevrell, you have the floor.

Mr JEVRELL – The presidency has said that the result is not an optimal one and there is the risk of different kinds of consequences. I would not dare to say which of the two would be the most probable, but as we have seen before in other nations with regard to such issues, they can truly have an effect in the country in which the event occurs, as well as in different ESDP missions.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you.

I call Mrs Blondin.

Mrs BLONDIN (*France*) (summary) paid tribute to the hard work that had been done during the Swedish Presidency. She asked about the implications of the Lisbon Treaty for foreign and defence policy: whether, for example, the treaty would help the EU tackle the major challenges of the day such as energy security.

The PRESIDENT – Would you like to respond to that question, Mr Jevrell?

Mr JEVRELL – Thank you very much. With regard to the development of the EEAS and the Lisbon Treaty and what it will mean for us in the future, the upcoming months will be very important. We will see the formation of the EEAS and a proposal for its organisation, with our decision being taken in April at the latest. At the same time, many aspects of the ESDP will be developed under the Lisbon Treaty. It is too early to say exactly what form that will take, but one thing is certain: the Lisbon Treaty has strengthened the capabilities of the EU to act in this area.

Energy security is not my field. We have seen this before, and it could happen again. Action has been taken to look into these issues and to provide good energy security within Europe. Sweden is fortunate in this regard because we are self-sufficient in the energy sector, but these issues should be looked into thoroughly.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Jevrell, for answering our questions. That concludes questions to the Swedish Presidency. I am pleased that you were able to be with us and we hope that you will pass on our warm regards to your Minister and to everybody in the Swedish Government.

We have a small gift for you, which it is our pleasure to give on such occasions.

Mr JEVRELL – Thank you very much indeed. You are most kind.

13. Address by Mr Theodoros Pangalos, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, representing the Greek WEU Presidency

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the address by Mr Theodoros Pangalos, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, representing the Greek WEU Presidency. Mr Pangalos is, of course, an old friend of many of us here.

Let me start by congratulating you on the outcome of the recent elections in Greece and your appointment to one of the highest posts in your country. You have been in Parliament for almost 30 years, including some ten years as a highly valued member of this Assembly. I should also like to remind colleagues that you were previously Minister of Foreign Affairs. Although we rejoice at your appointment, we are also sad that this means that you will no longer be able to represent Greece here in the Assembly where you were Chairman of the Political Committee and head of the Socialist Group. In this case we believe that Greece's gain is our loss.

Fortunately for us, the new head of the Greek Delegation is another long-standing friend, Dinos Vrettos, a much appreciated member of Assembly whose vast experience has been of great benefit to us for many years already. Indeed, we are honoured by the level of participation that the Hellenic Parliament accords this Assembly.

Deputy Prime Minister, as you are here to represent the current presidency, I should like to commend Greece for its active contribution to the debate on European security and defence and for the

work done by Greek parliamentarians, as well as by your ambassador to the WEU Permanent Council and the Political and Security Committee, Themistoklis Demiris, whom we are delighted to see with us today.

Deputy Prime Minister, during your time in this Assembly, you have always measured the full importance of the role played by national parliaments in the field of European Security and Defence Policy, with effect from today, the Common Security and Defence Policy. We know that you understand how crucial these coming months and years will be for the future of this Assembly, and we are confident that thanks to your contribution, the role of national parliaments in exercising democratic scrutiny over European security, defence and military issues will be considerably reinforced.

When I had the pleasure of meeting you in Athens shortly after the election and your appointment, we had a useful discussion on the complexity of the problems that we face in the coming months and years.

It is my great pleasure to invite you, Deputy Prime Minister, as a dear friend and colleague, to address the Assembly on behalf of the Greek WEU Presidency.

Mr PANGALOS (*Deputy Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, representing the Greek WEU Presidency*) – Thank you, Mr President. It is with emotion, and with a lot of memories of wonderful things that have been said in the past in mind, that I speak today as a representative of my Government to the Assembly. Thank you for your kind words. I am very moved to see here all the friends and colleagues who have been working together for such a long time on European defence and foreign policy. You mentioned, Mr President, that I was Chairman of the Political Committee and head of the Socialist Group. I think that that proves that although holding such positions in Assembly committees or groups will not necessarily make someone Prime Minister after their party wins the election, it can sometimes make them Deputy Prime Minister. So I say to colleagues: keep trying.

(The speaker continued in Greek)

(Summary) Although the Lisbon Treaty provided for a High Representative for Foreign Affairs, the EU already had a Foreign Service. The addition of a High Representative would, however, make the EU's foreign policy more effective. Subjects such as climate change and energy security would be easier to tackle, as would crime and illegal immigration. He invited members to compare the challenges facing the Union to those of ten years previously.

The work of the WEU spanned a vast range of subject matters, and there was a need to strengthen cooperation with other international organisations. Peacekeeping was a key part of the work of the United Nations such as in Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and Sudan. The EU military operation off the coast of western Africa, Operation Atalanta, was combating piracy at sea, but the EU was considering a land-based mission to augment the valuable work that had been carried out to date.

The EU was taking an overarching approach to maritime surveillance, and the Greek Presidency of the WEU was holding a seminar that would focus on drug trafficking and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The newly re-elected President of Afghanistan, Mr Karzai, needed to shoulder his responsibilities, and the international community needed to cooperate fully with both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The continuing expansion of Israeli settlements was holding back any chance of a lasting peace agreement.

The western Balkans was an area where further progress was required. Greece was proposing to put a road map in place by 2014, an auspicious year since it would be 100 years since the start of the first world war.

During 2009, the future budget of WEU had been under consideration. The budget had to be viewed in the context of the recent financial crisis and the straitened financial circumstances of many member nations. He felt that a common position would be reached by the Council and Parliamentary Assembly on the budget by the end of next year. It would likely be based on the draft currently being considered by the Council, which proposed zero nominal growth.

He stressed that the link between the Parliamentary Assembly and the presidency of the EU was very much alive. He also noted that the current acting Secretary-General of the Council was a provisional figure, and that whatever decisions were reached could be reviewed by their successor. He said that the important issue was WEU's future, and stressed that WEU was viewed as an important link to European citizens in matters of defence. He assured the Assembly that the democratic scrutiny of defence policy was important and would be taken into account when decisions about the future of WEU were taken.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Pangalos. As always, you spoke with great passion. You have kindly agreed to take questions following your address.

I call Mrs Brasseur, on behalf of the Liberal Group, to put the first question.

Mrs BRASSEUR (*Luxembourg*) (summary) thanked Mr Pangalos for his address. She said that Mr Medvedev had recently presented 14 points to improve European security, and Mr Höfer had spoken about peace from Vladivostok to Vancouver. She noted that Mr Medvedev had been clever about his timing and had presented his 14 points two days before the Lisbon Treaty came into force. She asked what the Greek Presidency thought about his proposals.

The PRESIDENT – Would you, Mr Pangalos, like to respond to that question?

Mr PANGALOS (summary) said that good relations between Russia and other European nations were vital for peace and security. He noted that while the EU was not always happy with Russia's position on certain issues, it was important to have a relationship. Russia was a vast country with important relationships with nations such as China and India, and he felt it was a positive sign that Russia was considering and acting to improve its relations with Europe. He noted that he had not had much time to scrutinise the detail of Mr Medvedev's proposals but he would do so over the coming days.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you.

I call Mr Greenway, on behalf of the Federated Group of Christian Democrats and European Democrats.

Mr GREENWAY (*United Kingdom*) – On behalf of the Federated Group, may I, as a former colleague, pass on my congratulations to you on becoming the Deputy Prime Minister of Greece? It is good to see that your government values the experience that you have gained in this Assembly and in the Council of Europe. I want to ask you what the Assembly should do to ensure that its value and worth are appreciated more by member governments. All the security and defence issues confronting Europe are on our agenda this week. We table reports, hold debates and discussions and make concrete proposals. You have said that it is important to scrutinise ESDP and that that is a job for national parliamentarians, but we are facing, as we have heard, a zero or nominal-growth budget. We have heard Robert Walter's proposals for the future, but what is your perspective? How will we get the resources we need to do a proper job? We are doing the work, but nobody values it properly.

The PRESIDENT – Would you, Mr Pangalos, like to respond to that question?

Mr PANGALOS – Our country, like every other at present, is suffering enormous deficits and now is not the time to ask for increases. National and international institutions are all facing such problems. I respect all contrary opinions, but the zero or nominal-growth budget, as you describe it – it is a decrease in the budget – is the best we could achieve. I am sure that colleagues are aware that there were views in the Council that went much further than these cuts. It was the best we could achieve.

The Assembly is a place for parliamentarians to discuss, study, research and inquire into issues relating to security, defence and foreign policy.

But is it the aim of such an Assembly to become some kind of international institute of the various parliaments to discuss these issues? Is it an instrument for the exercise of political control or of supranational activities? Should it be concerned with the supranational concept of foreign policies that have still to be discovered? This is the discussion that we are having. As you know, the European

Parliament has ambitions. We have an argument against the European Parliament, in that it is not an institution that has been elected for this purpose. If it gets this dimension, there will have to be further treaties than those that have been agreed up till now. As it stands, the instrument for exercising political control on the two sectors of activity that have just been created by the Lisbon agreement should be an instrument of the national parliaments. This is an Assembly composed of national parliaments. We can call it something else and we can organise it in another way, but up to now, that is what it is.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you.

I call Mr Mota Amaral.

Mr MOTA AMARAL (*Portugal*) – Thank you, Mr President. Mr Pangalos, I congratulate you on your new responsibilities and I wish you many successes. As you pointed out in your speech, this is an historic day. The Lisbon Treaty has come into force. In Portugal, today is a public holiday, but not for that reason. It was one anyway. You mentioned that one of the new institutions created by the Lisbon Treaty was the High Representative for Foreign and Defence Affairs. Do you think that her mandate includes having priority in taking a position on any question concerning foreign affairs in the European area? For instance, if there were a crisis in the eastern Mediterranean, or in the southern Balkans, would you refrain from making any comment on it until the High Representative had presented the position of the European Union?

The PRESIDENT – Would you, Mr Pangalos, like to respond to that question?

Mr PANGALOS – Thank you. You certainly have good reason to be happy about a treaty that is known as the Lisbon Treaty. It must be very dear to your heart. I am not in a position to comment on the activities of the lady who has been named as the High Representative. She is a real lady. Every lady is a lady but she is formally a lady: she is a double lady! I can tell what she is supposed to do. I think that, first of all, she has to be informed and to keep involved in the discussions.

Up to now, this was not a Community activity. The Council of Foreign Ministers of the European Union was named the General Affairs Council. In many cases, that was an understatement. It was called that because we did not want to call it a foreign policy or external affairs council. So we are in some ways recreating instruments, people, documents and pages of information.

The second level is that she will eventually have to call the attention of national governments to the situations that can be created here or there around the world or in our neighbourhood. She will also have to apply the principles of solidarity and mission guarantee. That is her role, and I think that she will have enough to do.

When the role of the High Representative has been fully occupied, we might proceed further, but the principle of the construction of the European Union has always been one of subsidiarity. This principle has to be applied. I am sure that the High Representative will not get involved with situations that are being dealt with in a satisfactory way by national governments.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you.

I call Mr Nicoloski.

Mr NICOLOSKI (*the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*) – First, I want to congratulate you on your election results and your new position. I wish you success and I hope that you will bring a new spirit of cooperation to the region. You have a goal of creating a new road map for the region by 2014, which is 100 years after the first world war. Will you continue with the politics of the Nea Demokratia Government, which was, from the one side, formal support for the region but from the other side, was a blocking of the region?

On Monday 6 December, there will be a meeting of the European Council, at which there should be a decision on whether my country will open negotiations to join the EU, under the recommendation of the European Commission, which is very clear and positive. However, there are clear signals from the Greek Government that there will be a veto in respect of that decision.

My direct question is: what will you do, and will you postpone the decision with another veto, which would postpone the problem? Or will you give the region a chance, as you know that a veto will make public opinion nervous?

The PRESIDENT – Would you, Mr Pangalos, like to respond to that question?

Mr PANGALOS – Mr Nicoloski, I am very glad to see you here. I have met you before several times. As you know, relations between Greece and your country are of the highest density, denser than those of any other country. I do not speak about the situation on your side of the border, but from our side, we see that we are among the first investors, that our trade balance is increasing; it is one of the biggest we have. One fifth or one fourth of your population moves to Greece every year. Several hundred thousand Greeks move to your country for different reasons. We have rich and developing relations. We wish that you would be in the European Union with us. That would allow us to further increase exchanges and lessen border obstacles, and so forth. The problem is simple: it is the name of the region. In that region, you are not alone. There is a Greek Macedonia also. I happen to have a Macedonian wife. Well, she is no longer my wife, but not for that reason.

My son is therefore half Macedonian – my ex-wife is from Salonica. If you were to copyright the name, my son would have to explain for his whole life that he is not from your country. We want to avoid that, as it creates tensions and misunderstandings. The Bulgarians also have an area that can be called Macedonia, around the town of Pirin. What we say is that your country, which is a new country, keeps something that refers to the Macedonian geographical area. It adds some geographical specification that is characteristic of and valuable to all names – we should have one name, not two or three, because that cannot help understanding. In that case, there is no problem for us. It is easy to do and, for me, natural.

As we say in Greece, you should always look at both sides. When you have such difficulty in accepting the geographical specification of your name, the Greeks understand that you want to monopolise the name and be the only Macedonia, which has irredentist dreams, and get together with the rest of Macedonia and absorb and monopolise history. History is not a political concept, but it is important.

The last time I went to Skopje, I stayed at Hotel Alexander the Great. Next door is the Vergina Hotel, which was named after a Greek place hundreds of kilometres to the south. What does that mean? If it was a simple, pure dream of participation in the past, which certainly belongs to the whole of humanity, we should not say no. However, if the desire is to monopolise borders, areas and history, we have problems. We do not want to bring such problems into the European Union; we want to solve them before they appear.

So, what are you going to do? That is the question I want to ask you.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you.

We have one more questioner. I call Mrs Doris Barnett.

Mrs BARNETT (*Germany*) (summary) congratulated Mr Pangalos on his new position and said that he remained one of the greatest experts in the subject in WEU. WEU represented a platform of democratic cooperation in which all countries could participate. The Assembly did not know what the future held for the Organisation. Its budget was only €8 million: this problem of funding limited the Assembly in what it could do. Money could not be a big obstacle to the functioning of the Organisation. She said that the Parliamentary Assembly was seen as a scrutinising body and needed to work towards a new arrangement with the EU. A challenge of such dimensions could not be given to a small committee but should be undertaken by the Assembly as a whole. Some would say that the Assembly should not exist. She did not want the Assembly to be dependent on NATO's committees and called for support for what the Assembly had been doing in the past. She asked Mr Pangalos where Greece stood on the continued existence of the Parliamentary Assembly.

The PRESIDENT – Would you, Mr Pangalos, like to respond to that question?

Mr PANGALOS – Thank you. I am in a difficult position because I have to remake my speech more efficiently. I have stated our position – as far as I could go into details – and we certainly think

that the Assembly is necessary. We tried our best to find a way to have a budget. That is all I can say for the moment. The future belongs to us and to all the governments, including the future Spanish Presidency. I think that national parliamentarians also have a mission to persuade their governments, because when we come to the Council room – when it meets, which is not very often – it is too late, and we have a given position. What I can tell you about the position of the Greek Government during its presidency is that we did as much as we could. That is as much as I can say. The situation is not the best possible.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you. Mr Pangalos, I am afraid I must crave your indulgence because my life is in danger. I have one extra questioner on my list, but I did not see her in the room earlier. She has indicated that she would still like to ask you a question. Neither you nor I would like to incur the displeasure of Mrs Josette Durrieu.

Mrs Durrieu, you have the floor.

Mrs DURRIEU (*France*) (summary) greeted Mr Pangalos as her friend and colleague. Greece was coming to the end of its joint presidency of the EU. She apologised for missing the speech of Mr Pangalos as she had arrived late at the Assembly owing to traffic. She asked what was new in the new architecture and what the Assembly's relationship with Russia was. Russia had withdrawn from the CFE Treaty. She further asked, following the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty, what the future of the Assembly was.

The PRESIDENT – Would you, Mr Pangalos, like to respond to that question?

Mr PANGALOS (summary) said that these were difficult questions. However, he asked colleagues to bear with him as he would be repeating his speech if he answered these questions. He had spoken extensively on these issues in his speech and offered to give Mrs Durrieu a copy of it. He thanked the members of the Assembly.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you very much indeed, Mr Pangalos. You are very kind.

I should inform members that earlier today I invested Mr Pangalos with honorary membership of our Assembly.

14. Address by His Excellency Mr Vladimir Chizhov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the European Union

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the address by His Excellency Mr Vladimir Chizhov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the European Union, and we now resume the debate on the European security architecture.

Ambassador, we are happy to welcome such a distinguished representative of the Russian Federation to this Assembly. Your experience of foreign affairs and the works you have published on European security are well-known and highly regarded. Since 2005, you have been the Russian Federation's Permanent Representative to the European Union in Brussels. I recall also that you were previously Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Russia is playing an ever more vital part in the changing European security architecture, as is reflected in the partnership with NATO. Your country is a global geopolitical player: in the northern regions Russia is a key supplier of gas to Europe and, as regards Europe's eastern dimension, your country is crucial to security and defence issues. All these, and many more matters involving the Russian Federation, are of great interest to us, as you can see from the reports that we are debating this afternoon.

This afternoon we are debating your President's initiative on a new European security architecture. Therefore, we are delighted to welcome you here and we look forward to hearing the view from Moscow on the subject and on the potential for a new platform for dialogue and cooperation between Russia and the rest of Europe.

Mr CHIZHOV (*Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the European Union*) – Honourable President, ladies and gentleman, I am truly grateful for the invitation to address the plenary session of

the European Security and Defence Assembly, an organisation that has made a dedicated contribution over the years to key issues of security and stability on the European continent, and is truly committed to continuing to do so.

The ESDA gathers its members today at an opportune moment for a substantial dialogue on the issue of a new security architecture for Europe, which is extremely relevant, both for Russia and Europe in general and for global affairs. We also see it as a concrete reaction to the initiative launched by President Dmitry Medvedev for a European security treaty.

The purpose of my presentation today is to invite distinguished members of the ESDA to a serious and honest discussion concerning the roots of present problems in Euro-Atlantic security. As a starting point, I ask you to address two simple questions – first, how should we approach these problems and, secondly, what will happen if we do nothing?

It is a universally recognised fact that present day challenges to security are increasingly acquiring a global dimension, and they certainly dictate a coordinated response from the international community. But all multinational structures designed to provide security – with the notable exception of the United Nations – have proved ill equipped to fulfil that function by virtue of their limited membership or outdated mandates, or both. That has inevitably resulted in fragmentation of security, both on worldwide and regional levels.

Unfortunately, Europe cannot claim to be an exception. Having boasted of its unique role as a beacon of peace and security for the rest of the world throughout the decades following the second world war, it can no longer claim that position. For all the deficiencies of the bipolar cold war security pattern, its demise at the turn of the 1990s did not lead to a fulfilment of aspirations of all the Europeans for a more secure future for their continent. A chain of bloody conflict in the Balkans, a proliferation of so-called frozen conflicts across Europe, followed by last year's criminal aggressive adventure by Georgia – all this, coupled with physical expansion of a military alliance created in the middle of the last century and desperately seeking to prove its relevance in a totally different world, has tarnished Europe's romantic image.

It is not that no attempts were made to rectify the situation. Creating the OSCE, its founding fathers hoped that a balanced, comprehensive approach to security in the wider Euro-Atlantic space would ultimately do the job. But, alas, the OSCE was prevented by some of its participating states – one, to be exact – from becoming a genuine international organisation, complete with a proper legal personality in terms of international law. Moreover, the carefully designed three-dimensional structure started tilting towards one of the three baskets, leaving the other two insufficiently filled or simply ignored.

In recent years there has been no lack of well phrased political declarations adopted with active Russian participation at various forums, including the OSCE, Russian-EU political dialogue – the Paris Declaration of 2000 on cooperation in the field of ESDP, to name just one – the Russia-NATO Council, starting with the 1997 Founding Act and the 2002 Rome Declaration. But all efforts to translate those abundant political commitments into legally binding obligations invariably met with stiff resistance. NATO, for one, has explicitly indicated that it opposed extending the level of security envisaged for its members – for all it is worth – to other European countries who should make an historic choice between applying to join or remaining content with second-class security status. Hence, fragmentation of the Euro-Atlantic security space.

Now let me turn to my second question: what if we just sit back and do nothing? Can it serve as a second-best choice for everybody? Definitely not. Just a glance at last year's events in the Caucasus provides enough evidence.

In my view, those events were a sign that it is urgently necessary to address the task of constructing a new European architecture, firmly guaranteeing equitable security for all, and at the same time taking into account the realities of the 21st century. Otherwise, the security situation will remain fragile and conflicts will spread and become a kind of cancer on the European and international stage.

I do not think that anyone will doubt the fact that a common security space cannot be built by excluding individual parts, but after the collapse of the bipolar world based on struggle between two opposing systems, an illusion emerged in some quarters that the world was now unipolar and that all problems could be solved easily from one centre. It happened at the end of the second world war, when three or four people sat down, pencils in their hands, and divided up Europe and the world. Our joint experience shows that such an approach leads to an increase in the number of crises, and a decrease in our ability to resolve them. We propose thinking about these matters together. Why should a united Europe be built from a single centre and not from many sides at once?

The basic problem in international relations today is that there is increasingly less respect for the basic principles of international law, while at the same time there is an ever-growing desire to resolve this or that issue on the basis of the considerations and expediency of the moment. This is a very dangerous phenomenon. We need to understand this, and move to strengthen the foundations of international law in our actions on the international stage.

I have described those things in such detail to provide the Assembly with some background for the initiative of President Medvedev to conclude a treaty that would ensure a truly universal system of collective security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Since President Medvedev came up with this idea in Berlin on 5 June 2008, we have often heard about deals by our partners to make the Russian initiative more specific. Today, I am happy to guide you to the kremlin.ru website, where you can see a draft in Russian and in English.

I hope that there is common wisdom in this auditorium that any multilateral treaty is a product of the collective effort of all interested parties. In general, Europe will be familiar with the advantages of common approaches to common problems, and does not need to be persuaded of the importance of strict observance of the political commitments that we have all assumed on different occasions. The point is that these political commitments proved not to be effective enough. What we need is a set of clearly defined and newly formed rules of the game in the Euro-Atlantic region, in which the interests of all participants are taken into account, no one is isolated and no zones with different levels of security exist.

Let me briefly describe how we see the principal building blocks of the treaty. The first should confirm basic principles of relations between states: respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of states; non-interference in internal affairs; the inadmissibility of the use of force or the threat of using force in international relations; and respect for all the other principles set out in the United Nations Charter. It is fundamental for the treaty to guarantee uniform interpretation of those principles.

States and international organisations should also confirm now, in a legally binding form, their previously assumed political commitments: namely, not to ensure one's own security at the expense of others; not to allow acts, including by military alliances or coalitions, that undermine or weaken the unity of the common security space; to prevent the development of such military alliances, which will threaten the security of other parties to the treaty; and to respect the right of any state to neutrality. The treaty should also confirm, again in a legally binding form, the provision of the OSCE charter for European security, signed by all heads of state and governments in Istanbul, that no state or international organisation can have exclusive rights to maintain peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region. In other words, we need to strengthen and ensure the implementation of the principles contained in the Helsinki Final Act and other basic documents of interstate relations.

In the second block of the treaty, we suggest expounding basic principles for the development of arms control regimes, confidence building, and restrained and reasonable sufficiency in military posture. The third block will reflect the principles of conflict settlement that are to be applied to all crisis situations. The treaty should lay down procedures and mechanisms for conflict resolution in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter. We consider that enshrining those principles will help avoid double standards in conflict settlement, and not allow things to reach the point at which parties exercise the right of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which of course remains intact.

The fourth block of the future treaty is dedicated to mechanisms of interaction between states and organisations encountering new threats and challenges, including the spread of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, illicit drug trafficking and other types of organised crime. The treaty as a whole will ensure that international law maintains a universal character both in the conception and application of its norms.

In speaking at the European security and defence Assembly, it is logical to elaborate on the activities of three organisations: the European Union, NATO and the OSCE. As the Russian Federation's permanent representative to the EU, I would like to emphasise the decisive role of Russian-European Union relations in the stability of our continent, but the potential for further development of our partnership is indeed great. Resolving the Caucasus crisis of August last year was a serious subject for our interaction with the European Union with regard to regional affairs. Essentially, a European Union solution to the problem was found. We see that the EU has also acquired a firm footing in the field of crisis management, which is one of the priorities of European security and defence policy. That is why it is apparent that leading European countries, and the EU as an integrated entity, should use that famous single voice and contribute to a full-scale audit of the European security structure.

On NATO, I would like to stress that we are not subjecting the entire present European security architecture to a test. It is absolutely not true that our initiative for a European security treaty is aimed at undermining NATO, but NATO-centrism is, by definition, counter productive, as this concept does not take into account the legitimate interests of non-NATO countries and thus artificially impedes the creation of a truly universal collective security system in the Euro-Atlantic area. I am confident that Europe understands this perfectly well. NATO's further eastward enlargement creates difficulties for Russia and for Euro-Atlantic politics as a whole. Some NATO members have brought an obsolete confrontational policy with them, as if they were joining the NATO not of today – and much less of tomorrow – but of its inception in 1949. This attitude drags the alliance into its previous state, of the cold war era.

The Russia-NATO Council was established on the basis of a progressive principle: namely, that each country would have an equal voice. In practice, this principle has never worked. We saw a NATO plus one formula appearing again and again.

The OSCE was created to examine all aspects of security – military, political, economic and humanitarian. However, this task has never been accomplished. We have been unable to transform the OSCE into a fully fledged regional organisation within the meaning of Chapter 8 of the United Nations Charter, and its internal balance is clearly destroyed. I cannot agree with the allegation that Russia is trying to substitute a comprehensive character of security as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act by consigning the OSCE's humanitarian basket to oblivion. By no means do we want to cast down the agreed foundations of the OSCE's activities, but we see that too many explosive problems have accumulated in the sphere of military and political security and they require immediate attention.

Naturally, we are ready to talk about the OSCE's problems within the Corfu process launched last August at the initiative of the Greek chairmanship. That should help foster open dialogue on the destiny of the OSCE but on the issue of the fundamental concept of security – Russia's initiative for a European security treaty is precisely about that – the OSCE's framework is not completely adequate. Our intention is to promote the initiative in all the formats concerned with security issues.

We also propose to convene a pan-European summit of leaders of key international organisations to compare the security strategies that each of these entities has. That would be an important step towards devising uniform approaches to the creation of a unified and indivisible security space in the Euro-Atlantic region.

Let me respond briefly to some points raised in the report from the Political Committee. Generally, I would admit that the European security treaty initiative from Russia entails a complicated process of comprehension and the need to overcome a number of stereotypes. I want to stress again that the Russian proposal has no hidden agenda. We are inviting everyone, including all security-related organisations in the Euro-Atlantic area, to join in the collective and honest discussion about how the present commitments are being fulfilled and why there are problems with doing that.

I should also like to draw your attention to the misperception of Russia as a country “whose relations with almost all of its neighbours are characterised by a lack of mutual confidence or outright tension...Russia’s recognition of the two breakaway areas of Georgia, its military build up there and continuing difficulties with its observance of international commitments made in August last year raised questions marks over the very principles that the Russian President has set out as integral to the kind of new security architecture he wants for Europe.”

These accusations are unfair and groundless. I hope that Europe will never return to the principle of “you are either with us or against us”, which was initially coined by Josef Stalin and repeated in earnest by George W. Bush. That would be perilous and reckless. A revival of the principle would provoke the creation of new dividing walls in our continent. Russia has defined its own place in the international scene and will strive towards a balanced and multi-polar world, a world that takes into account all members of the international community.

For Russia, the CIS space – the post-Russia space – is not a chess board or an area of distrust. Russia is not the only country with privileged interests in relations with its closest neighbour. Those countries have privileged interests in Russia. We do not oppress each other or engage in arm-twisting. It is high time that everyone understood that.

In conclusion, Russia is a country that has positioned itself on the world stage as a country with a responsible foreign policy. Of course we want to interact with responsible and independent partners with whom we can work in constructing a fair and democratic world order that would ensure security and prosperity not only for a select few, but for all. In our view, the European Security and Defence Assembly fully meets these criteria. As parliamentarians in an international assembly, you are ideally suited to proposing new ideas, initiating debate on crucial issues and making every effort to bring to the attention of Governments the challenges we all face. Let me wish the Assembly success in its future work. Thank you very much.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Chizhov, for your fascinating address. You will know that some colleagues may wish to ask you questions so I ask you to retake your seat in the hemicycle and we will invite you to return to the rostrum at the end of the debate.

15. Towards a new security architecture for Europe – reply to the annual report of the Council

The PRESIDENT – We now return to the debate on the report from the Political Committee. The first speaker I will call is Mr Hancock, who will speak on behalf of the Liberal Group.

Mr HANCOCK (United Kingdom) – I will speak later as Chairman of the Political Committee and allow other colleagues to speak now.

The PRESIDENT – That is very kind. Before I call Mr Santini, I remind colleagues that earlier this afternoon we changed our Rules of Procedure to allow the leaders of all 27 national delegations to take the Chair briefly to allow the President to do other things. It is with great pleasure that I will vacate the chair and give way to the leader of the Irish delegation, Mr Rory O’Hanlon, the former speaker of the Dail.

I call Mr Santini.

(Mr O’Hanlon, Chairman of the Ireland Delegation took the Chair)

Mr SANTINI *(Italy)* (summary) said that the debate had been enriched by the quality of the speeches that had been made that afternoon and that, in the few brief moments he had, he wished to draw attention to both the past and the future, and the shortcomings of the three pillars of European security – the OSCE, NATO and the EU. The fact that the EU now had a High Representative for Foreign Affairs would undoubtedly improve matters. He reiterated his earlier statement that peace meant not just the absence of war, but peaceful coexistence, the absence of terrorism, of religious fundamentalism and organised crime, and secure energy supplies and telecommunications.

It also meant that issues such as atmospheric pollution and water pollution needed to be considered and measures designed to combat them. Only once Europe had put its own house in order should it consider its relations with other nations such as China, Afghanistan and Iran.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Frécon.

Mr FRÉCON (*France*) (summary) said that he congratulated both the rapporteurs on a comprehensive and thought-provoking report. It was especially timely, since it had been 20 years since the Berlin wall had fallen.

It was important to consider the mental barriers between Russia and Europe. A lack of understanding had often complicated relations between the two. The current system was no longer suited to our complex world. Perhaps this was because it had been designed and structured to meet the needs of a bi-polar world that had ended with the cold war 20 years ago. However, this should not mean that an untried solution was put in its place. There should be detailed and thorough discussions over the structure of any new security agreement. The OSCE was a suitable forum for negotiations and it was to be hoped that the Corfu process would prove successful. With a Helsinki mindset, perhaps now was the time to take a fresh look at how Europe structured its security framework, without compromising NATO in the process. A new dialogue would also cover how European nations could work together to meet common challenges such as terrorism and organised crime.

This new era of security cooperation could extend beyond Europe. The election of President Obama in the United States was a sign of hope; he seemed to have more desire to pursue multilateral solutions to problems than his predecessor. However, Russia needed to demonstrate its commitment to values shared across Europe, including an acknowledgement of the inviolability of national borders. This should include allowing international observers freer access to Georgia, and avoiding escalating the situation through a military build-up.

Finally, he stressed his wish that ongoing negotiations would succeed in areas of common interest, particularly in relation to energy and trade.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mrs Nurmi.

Mrs NURMI (*Finland*) – I thank the rapporteurs, Mr Arcadio Díaz Tejera and Mr Gerd Höfer for producing this timely report. It is important for this Assembly to contribute to the discussion on a European security architecture. Their report provides us with a good opportunity for this. I am also very glad that so many of you visited Helsinki a few weeks ago to discuss these issues in the ESDA/WEU colloquy held in the Finnish Parliament. Many of the ideas and conclusions in this report are based on views that were presented in Helsinki.

The European security concept needs to be reviewed at regular intervals as well as the implications this will have for security and defence. We have to look at the global level, which emphasises issues such as climate change, energy and the connection between development and security, as well as at the more practical issues involved on a European and sub-regional level. This is essential for us in order to strengthen our internal cooperation in the EU, as well as with our neighbours. A review of present concepts and structures does not have to mean new organisations. We are all members of the OSCE, and we can work within existing structures when we are discussing security in the Euro-Atlantic region.

As the rapporteurs have noted, the OSCE has already, as part of the so-called Corfu process, started a structured dialogue aimed at rebuilding trust and confidence among states in the whole OSCE region. I fully support the ideas included in the report to develop proposals for new forms of conflict prevention and management, and to identify and address new and emerging threats to Euro-Atlantic security. The report also calls for interparliamentary dialogue on the Euro-Atlantic security architecture, and I am glad that our Presidential Committee has already decided to set up a working group to consider our cooperation with the Russian Parliament.

The European Union has a key role for Finland. The Union's security capabilities have been improved, and will be further strengthened. Close EU cooperation, as well as mutual assistance and solidarity, are important elements of our own security concept. In that context, we also support efforts to strengthen the EU's foreign policy role, as well as the unity of the EU on foreign and security policy issues.

When discussing the concept of European security, I want to draw attention to developments in the northern and Arctic regions, where we can clearly see how global issues such as climate change and energy security have implications for Europe as a whole. For the EU as a global actor, it is important to be proactive and committed to the cooperation going on in that region. Many Arctic states are increasing their military presence in the region. However, the opportunities for cooperation on issues such as energy and sustainable development are immense, and will most likely surpass the challenges that competition and risk of conflict might pose. The opportunities to advance the European interest are good, but the northern member states need the backing of the whole Union.

The region also provides many new opportunities for cooperation, especially with Russia, but also in a broader transatlantic context. As the rapporteurs point out, there is intensive cooperation between the EU and Russia on a wide range of issues, based on increasingly important trade relations, including in the energy sector, but there is far too little such cooperation in security and crisis management.

The PRESIDENT – Mrs Nurmi, we have only 20 minutes remaining, so please will you conclude?

Mrs NURMI (*Finland*) – In northern Europe, we can see many opportunities to combine such interests by working more closely within existing institutions and frameworks.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you. I call Mr Kieres.

Mr KIERES (*Poland*) – Mr President, members of the Assembly, I could not but agree with the draft recommendation, and would like to make three quotes. The first is, “Convinced that a common security system in which all countries enjoy equal security can only work if all partners share common values”. That can only be true. There are some common values such as “Liberté, égalité, fraternité” or those incorporated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We all agree that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and must not be silenced, discriminated against or persecuted because of their opinions. It is hard to feel comfortable with countries in which not everyone has the right to own property and some are arbitrarily deprived of their property. Although we ought to try to understand the lingering authoritarian legacy, we should not forget such principles. The Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights can play a role in that context by promoting human rights, democracy and tolerance.

The second quote is, “Believing that Russia should review its relations with its neighbours, which are marked by a lack of confidence”, caused by its “involvement in what are known as the ‘frozen’ conflicts”. Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia – some fear that there will be other cases, but we in Poland need no more examples. We need a thaw that will unfreeze those conflicts. Once again, OSCE should, and I hope will, play a key role in negotiations.

The third quote is, “Noting that the vast majority of OSCE participating states are reluctant to envisage new institutions... but agree on the need to improve the functioning of the existing structures”. We can launch a new security system only if we are absolutely sure that we need one and that we have exhausted all other options. For the time being, however, the Corfu process within OSCE can be perceived as a success. We have a strategic and constructive discussion, which encompasses not only hard but soft aspects of security. The dialogue on European security is undoubtedly needed and cannot be avoided. That is why we must carry on with the Corfu process and strengthen OSCE effectiveness. I hope the OSCE Ministerial Council to be held in Athens today and tomorrow will decide to continue its work in the present form. Thank you.

(*Mr Walter, President of the Assembly, resumed the Chair*)

The PRESIDENT – Thank you very much.

Our final speaker is Mr Darchiashvili.

Mr DARCHIASHVILI (*Georgia*) – I also thank the rapporteurs for a thorough and concrete report and recommendation. Three points are especially important. First, the engagement of Russia is necessary and no one can doubt that. Secondly, that should not lead us to forget some discrepancies or

deviations – to put it mildly – between deeds and words, and between what is declared and what is done in Russian foreign, and not only foreign, policy.

Thirdly, as has already been outlined by our Polish colleague, unless basic values are shared, all-encompassing security is not possible or viable. I represent a government of a country that was named by Mr Chizhov as criminal and aggressive. Of course I would not use the same words in the Chamber, which is not the place for such an exchange of words, but I put three, perhaps rhetorical, questions.

First, in the current security architecture of Europe, what, practically and fundamentally, goes against territorial integrity, sovereignty and multilateralism, also mentioned in Mr Medvedev's declaration as we heard it? Secondly, the modern paradigm of security is based on human security, cooperative security and soft security. Which of those three pillars of modern, all-encompassing security was respected by Russia in its recent behaviour in the international arena? I hope that forced passportisation will not be claimed as a Russian style of human security. Thirdly, although there are critical reports about Georgia, which is ready to take responsibility, does Russia accept and take seriously any of the criticism of Russia? Alternatively, do we still face a country whose leadership believes that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a geopolitical tragedy? If so, where are the common values, and how can all-encompassing security be achieved in cooperation with Russia and other countries? Thank you.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Darchiashvili.

There is always a danger when you leave the chair for a few minutes that you resume work with an out-of-date list. We have one final speaker, Mr Sooäär.

Mr SOOÄÄR (*Estonia*) – Thank you, Mr President. Dear colleagues, I respect what the Russian Ambassador to the EU has said, and I think that everyone in this audience agrees that improved relations between the EU and Russia will benefit both sides and the rest of the world. It is also clear to us that that goal can be achieved only through skilful diplomacy and mutual respect for each other's values, cultures and ways of thinking. There is definitely no space for mediaeval understanding here, only the careful consideration of the 2009 ways of communication in order to move forward.

It was not clear to me what Mr Ambassador meant when he spoke of some new NATO member countries communicating in the language of the 1949 NATO. I would like to hear from His Excellency which NATO countries he had in mind when he made that comment and on what basis he reached such a conclusion. Perhaps there is a simple communication problem here between the EU and Russia, which could be easily solved.

The PRESIDENT – I now invite Mr Chizhov to respond to some of the points that have been made in the debate. I regret that I will have to limit you, Mr Chizhov, to a maximum of five minutes, but we will be delighted to hear your responses to the questions that have been posed in this quite lively debate that we have had this afternoon.

Mr CHIZHOV – Thank you very much, Mr President. I will try to be as brief as possible. Let me assemble some of the questions concerning common values. Mr Kieres from Poland referred to common values, as did a number of others. We continually debate common values with the EU and in the framework of our negotiations for a new basic treaty. But whenever I ask for a list of common values, no one can give one. I ask the distinguished gentleman from Poland whether his country, for example, has a value that is common in the part of Europe where I happen to live now, in Belgium and the Netherlands – same sex marriages. Is that part of our common values?

I would rather support the view expressed by Mr Sooäär of Estonia – respect for each other's values. Of course, there are universal values such as basic human rights – the right to life, the right to dignity, the right to elect a government. Those are universal and they are not confined only to Europe – they are global. But I am sure that you will agree that there are differences connected with history, with religion to an extent, and with some other aspects, which need to be respected.

Secondly, a point was made concerning the need not to create new institutions before we exhaust existing ones. Nothing in what my President has proposed envisages a new bureaucracy. The

treaty is not aimed at creating a new superstructure; on the contrary, it proceeds from the ultimate democratic assumption that all existing structures can join together in a common effort to provide answers for the challenges to European security in the 21st century.

Thirdly, Mrs Nurmi from Finland referred to the Arctic. I hate to remind you about geography, but currently the EU is not an Arctic entity. It does not have access to the Arctic, as the Arctic nations perceive it. That is not only my country's view; it is shared by other Arctic nations – the United States of America, Canada, Norway and Iceland. Of course, you will argue that Iceland may soon join the EU, but then we will be glad to discuss that issue.

Fourthly, the point was made that Russia should renew its relations with its neighbours, and there was a list of neighbours. I can confirm that Russia has reviewed its relations with its neighbours, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, by recognising these new vibrant democracies.

Reference was also made to NATO members. Please, do not drag me beyond the confines of my diplomatic profession to name names. But it is a well-known fact that in recent weeks and months there were statements by officials from one of the newer NATO member states that NATO should devote less attention to its global missions in Afghanistan and elsewhere and return to its original purpose as defined in the North Atlantic Treaty and provide defence for its members against potential Russian aggression. That is what the thinking is – without naming names.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Chizhov.

Does Mr Höfer wish to reply?

Mr HÖFER (*Germany*) (summary) was grateful to all the participants in the debate and noted that a dialogue had already begun. He would have done the same as the guest speaker as certain things should remain not commented on. The report was both neutral and unbiased in order to create a positive forum for dialogue. He asked members to look at paragraphs 128-133 and not to single out one paragraph that may put a greater slant on the picture. There was a greater need for discourse on interpretation. Sovereignty meant there was a need to find parameters for cooperation. He called for an increased dialogue; however he could not determine set values. There existed a considerable problem when interpreting certain words within the report. The fact that there could be negotiation on something that was controversial was one of the greatest values of democracy. He said that there was a need for a constant review process of everything that was being done and that this should be actively pursued. This was the basis for future talks yet to come.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Höfer.

I now call the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr Hancock. You have a maximum of five minutes.

Mr HANCOCK (*United Kingdom*) – On behalf of the Committee, I thank the rapporteur for the work that he has done in producing the report. I also thank Mr Hilger and I thank the Russian ambassador, Mr Chizhov, for coming here. It was a bit like Daniel coming to the lions' den, but the sort of comments he made suggested that he is rather used to talking in the lions' den of the EU and that coming here was therefore of no great difficulty for him.

If ever anyone needed proof of why we need to do something about European security, they would need only to look at the list of names that we will commemorate in a few minutes' time at the Arc de Triomphe. In 17 countries, there are families who will be celebrating Christmas with an empty place in their home, because their son or daughter has died in a conflict somewhere around the world in the last 12 months. That list of names is formidable; there are well over 100 names for the United Kingdom alone. There will be great sadness and sorrow. As politicians, we will not be the ones on the front line doing the fighting or dying, but we will be making decisions that send young men and women into harm's way. If this report does anything, it brings a sense of reality to our responsibility, which is to do something about the state of security in our continent of Europe, while spreading the word elsewhere.

We should not allow things to remain there. As the report says, we need to consider the frozen conflicts that bedevil efforts to make what could be a step in the right direction for us as a community

of politicians. Those frozen conflicts continue to pose so many obstacles that it will be very hard for us ever to obtain common agreement on a common security problem, so we have to devote some time and energy to trying to resolve those frozen conflicts.

The report is honest enough to pose some real questions. The Ambassador talked about common values. What were they? Who will set the agenda for discussing common values? Where do we start? The issue is very difficult and complex to debate, but we have to start somewhere, and saying that it is too difficult to start the process is a step backwards. We need to be upfront and willing to confront the issues. We need to decide what our shared values are, and what values we see as having prime importance in trying to get agreement. We need new ideas, as the report rightly says.

I welcome the Russian initiative, albeit that very few of us have had the chance to look at it in detail. We would be foolish in the extreme if we ignored the opportunity to accept a new initiative coming from Europe's biggest nation which seeks to build that bond. We need to look seriously at it and grasp it. We should welcome the fact that, irrespective of the timing, the Russian President was prepared to start to put his cards on the table – even though he has some very close to his chest, as any good card player would. He was prepared to be brave enough to put down the challenge. That is what he has done: he has challenged the rest of us to come back to him and give our response, with a view to working out a policy that will bring us together.

We need to find a way of not ignoring each other's problems. Issues in central Asia are very important. They are not a job merely for the OSCE; they are a job for us. In years to come, many of us will depend on the energy and resources coming out of central Asia. We cannot pick people up simply because we need to use their resources; we will have to work with them and give them stability for their future. You cannot just use and abuse people. As a collective community in Europe, we need to work with those in central Asia to construct a much more convenient way of doing business with them. We should not always be looking for what we can take. Let us look for what we can give back to central Asia. The report starts to address those issues.

I hope that the report will be unanimously endorsed. I am disappointed that so few people are here, but I hope it is because everyone will be in attendance at the Arc de Triomphe. If we do nothing else this week but give this report a clean bill of health and ensure its rapid progress, we will have done some justice to those poor families who have suffered the loss of their loved ones over the past year.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Hancock.

The Political Committee has presented a draft recommendation to which an amendment has been tabled.

We come to Amendment 1, which reads as follows:

At the end of recital *(iv)* of the preamble to the draft recommendation add the following text:

“and taking note of the Russian draft for a European Security Treaty published on 29 November 2009;”.

I call Mr Höfer to support the amendment.

Mr HÖFER (*Germany*) (summary) said that Russia had submitted a draft treaty and this had now been reflected in the report.

The PRESIDENT – Does anyone wish to oppose the amendment? ...

That is not the case.

The committee is clearly in favour.

I will now put the amendment to the vote.

(A vote was taken by show of hands)

Amendment 1 is adopted.

We will now proceed to vote on the draft recommendation, as amended, contained in Document C/2053.

Under Rule 36 of the Rules of Procedure, if five or more representatives or substitutes in the Chamber so desire, the Assembly shall vote by roll-call on a draft recommendation.

Does any member wish to propose a vote by roll-call? ...

That is not the case. We will have a vote by show of hands.

(A vote was taken by show of hands)

The draft recommendation, as amended, is adopted.

16. Ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe

The PRESIDENT – I remind all members present that the coaches to take us to the Arc de Triomphe for the ceremony to rekindle the Flame of Remembrance will leave at 17.45. The ceremony will end at around 19.00.

17. Date, time and orders of the next sitting

The PRESIDENT – That concludes our business for this afternoon.

I propose that the Assembly hold its next public sitting tomorrow morning at 10.00 with the orders of the day agreed at the start of this sitting.

The sitting is closed.

(The sitting was closed at 17.48)