

The WEU European construction and the Alliance

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The problem of creating a European Security dimension has existed since the countries of Western Europe – or at least some of them – began their process of co-operation and integration.

It was publicly defined as early as 5th March 1946 when Winston Churchill, speaking at Fulton in the United States, denounced the «iron curtain which had descended across the continent from Stettin on the Baltic to Trieste on the Adriatic».

The former British Prime Minister did state the problem, but was a long way from offering a European solution to it. It was, in fact, in an Atlantic or rather narrow Anglo-Saxon context that he was seeking that solution when he called for – and I quote – «a fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples to counter any attempt at adventurism».

In point of fact, it fell to the seasoned trade unionist, Ernest Bevin, then British Foreign Secretary, to spell out the thinking which foreshadowed both a European and an Atlantic policy.

Addressing the House of Commons on 22nd January 1948, he said: «Surely these developments (meaning the analysis he had just made of the, then, prevailing international situation) point to the conclusion that the free nations of Western Europe must now draw closer together. How much these countries have in common! Our sacrifices in the war, our hatred of injustice and oppression, our parliamentary democracies, our striving for economic rights, our love of liberty. I believe the time is ripe for the consolidation of Western Europe».

When he spoke of «Western Europe», he was thinking primarily of his own country, France, the Benelux and also Italy. Only some three years after the end of World War II, he also included Germany «but only when it has become a democracy».

This London initiative led, on 17th March 1948, to the signing of the Brussels Treaty, out of which the Western European Union (W.E.U.) originates.

The Act creates, between the five signatory Parties (Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the

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Netherlands, the United Kingdom) an Alliance which formally commits each of the participating States to the defence of one of them, should it be the victim of an aggression, in a more compulsory way than does the Atlantic Alliance (but this formal difference between the Treaty of Brussels and the Alliance is, in practice, completely eroded by the existence in the framework of the Atlantic Partnership, of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation with the so-called integrated command).

But, what is more, this Brussels Treaty marked an important stage in the process of European construction, notwithstanding what subsequently became, for years, of the work of implementation of the Agreement.

One has only to read the text of the document to realise that. Indeed, the title itself of the Pact and its preamble are clear in this regard. The document is called «Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence».¹

As for the preamble, it declares the aim of the signatories to be, namely:

To fortify and preserve the principles of democracy, Personal freedom and political liberty, the constitutional traditions and the rule of law, which are their common heritage;

To strengthen, with these aims in view, the economic, social and cultural ties by which they are already united;

To co-operate loyally and to co-ordinate their efforts to create in Western Europe a firm basis for European economic recovery.

This European option was to be further reaffirmed and strengthened a few years later, when the Treaty of Brussels was to be modified by the Paris Agreements enlarging the Pact to the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy. Suffice to consider, in this respect, the new paragraph 6 of the Preamble declaring that the High Contracting Parties are resolved «to promote the *unity* and to encourage the progressive *integration* of Europe».

It is worth noting that, furthermore, the Brussels Treaty came into being against the general background of growing moves towards European co-operation and integration. Was it not practically contemporaneous with the Treaty setting up the O.E.E.C., the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (Paris, 16th April 1948)? Was it not almost contemporaneous with the Agreement creating the Council of Europe (London, 5th May 1949) Was it not only two years younger than the Act establishing the

¹ *The social and cultural competences will later be taken over by the Council of Europe. The economic competences will be carried out in a more and more limited way until Great Britain's accession to the Communities.*

European Coal and Steel Community (E.C.S.C) (signed on 8th April 1951) as the first step towards what was to become the Europe of the Six, then the Nine and Ten, and now the Twelve?

It is, in fact, at the crossroad of the Brussels Treaty out of which the W.E.U. originates and the Paris Treaty creating the E.C.S.C. that was to be launched what remains until now the most ambitious project in the field of European integration.

It is significant that this attempt was originally made in the context of the European Security dimension.

The audacious project I am alluding to is, of course, the one regarding the creation of a European Defence Community (E.D.C).

The idea of the realisation of a European Defence Community carried with it, as a logical consequence, an attempt to create a European Political Community with competences in the field of economic policies, Foreign Relations policies and Security policies, with a supranational character, symbolised by a two-heads Executive (a Council of Ministers from each member State and a European Commission) by a bicameral Assembly (a House directly elected) and a Senate made up of members designated by representatives of national parliaments, and by the fact that the President of the Commission was to be appointed by the Senate and was to be responsible to the House.

It is clear that if the European Defence Community and the European Political Community had been approved in the first half of the 50' s, the European Union – which most of the governments of the Twelve are now seeking, especially since the European Summit of the Hague in 1969 – would virtually have been achieved more than 30 years ago.

As everyone knows, it failed in 1954.

The European Defence Community was also intended to integrate the German Forces into the Allied Command set up by the Washington Treaty of 4th April 1949. When it failed, some other way had to be found of bringing them in. This was achieved by the enlargement of the Brussels Treaty Organisation, agreed at the London Conference in September 1954 and endorsed on 23rd October by the Paris Agreements, which took effect on 6th May 1955; Germany then joined Western European Union, as well as Italy.

The terms of this new Treaty comprised in particular:

- a British undertaking to maintain certain specified forces on the mainland of

Europe and not to withdraw them without the agreement of the majority of its partners (an historical *premiere* and turning point in Great Britain's history);

- the creation of a Parliamentary Assembly;
- wider powers of decision for the Permanent Council of the Organisation;
- the creation of a Standing Armaments Committee for armaments co-operation among the member States;
- the establishment of an Armaments Control Agency to monitor the observance of certain limitations imposed on the Federal Republic of Germany in the field of armaments production, as well as of certain obligations accepted by all member States, namely regarding the production of A (Atomic), B (Bacteriological) and C (Chemical) weapons;

This was clear evidence that the authors of the new Pact wished to provide the Western European Union with the means of developing a European Security dimension, admittedly on a more modest scale than the E.D.C. would have established, but nevertheless adequate and capable of gradual extension.

Unfortunately, W.E.U. did not really make the best of this new thrust and was content to pursue, in the shadow of NATO, tasks which were certainly not without importance but were of a routine nature.

However, after the entry into force of the Rome Treaties and before the accession of the United Kingdom to the Communities, W.E.U.'s Ministerial Council did serve, not without difficulties to tell the truth, as a useful forum for meetings and exchanges of views between the Six and London. When, however, the United Kingdom joined the E.C.S.C., Euratom and the E.E.C. in 1973, that Council lost this role. The ministers then deserted it – it held virtually no more meetings at that level between 1973 and 1984 – thus thwarting the Assembly's efforts to establish a democratic dialogue on European Security problems within W.E.U.

Over this period, efforts to build up Europe continued, with – after the signing of the Rome Treaties in 1957 – the inception of Political Co-operation in 1970, which added a new dimension to the European structure and which has continued to advance ever since.

The Security dimension is still completely lacking, however, despite all the efforts which have multiplied, particularly since 1970, and even before with the two «Plans Fouchet».

Consider, for example, the document on a European identity published in Copenhagen

on 14th December 1973 by the Foreign Ministers of what was still the Nine, which stressed that Foreign Policy and Security aspects had an important role in the achievement of a more united Europe.

The famous Tindemans Report, completed in December 1975, at the request of the member countries of the Communities (meeting as the European Council in Paris in December 1974) – and just as valid and topical now as it was then – declared that European Union «will not be complete until it has a common Defence Policy».

For their part, both the European Parliament and the Assembly of Western European Union committed themselves long ago to work towards the establishment of such a policy. The most recent of these attempts was the draft Treaty for a European Union, largely inspired by the efforts of M. Spinelli and of the «Crocodile Club» and approved by a Resolution of the European Parliament on 14th February 1984, which contains important articles regarding this field.

Furthermore, spurred on by the European Parliament, the Commission of the European Communities, acting on the impetus given by, among others, Commissioner Etienne Davignon, set about the task of bringing the production of military equipment and especially conventional weapons within the ambit of the Communities' industrial policy.

But it was European Political Co-operation which seemed to offer the best framework for developing a European Security dimension, and it is here that the greatest efforts have been made to that end.

Hitherto, unfortunately, it has not achieved all the desired results.

In practice, the relationship between European Political Co-operation and Security problems has, from the outset, been shrouded in ambiguities which nothing has yet succeeded in dissipating.

Right from its start, European Political Co-operation has had to address a problem with an important Security dimension, the problem of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (C.S.C.E.).

This question was on the agenda of the first ministerial meeting on matters of Political Co-operation in Munich in 1970. Since then, this topic has never been off its agenda, and its Security dimension has increasingly come into the spotlight, especially in connection with the Stockholm Meeting, the Conference on Security and Confidence-building Measures and Disarmament.

Furthermore, concertation among the Nine and later the Ten on this subject proved to be one of the early and indeed lasting successes of Political Cooperation. Not only

were they able to hold, in spite of all difficulties, a united front during the ten years that the C.S.C.E. process has now lasted, but they had a major influence in the shaping of the position of the West regarding this process.

The fact remains however that after fifteen years of experience the Ten, now Twelve, have never managed to agree on the systematic discussion of security questions within Political Co-operation. Nevertheless, certain member States have launched major initiatives aimed at changing this situation and at formally endowing Political Co-operation with substantial responsibility in Security matters.

Through the impetus given by the UK Presidency, for example, European Political Co-operation was literally urged to vest itself with real powers in security matters, enabling it, at last, to address this subject systematically. After long and difficult discussions, however, the attempt failed. It was only with difficulty that the «London Report» – approved in December 1981 by the European Council – conferred upon Political Co-operation the right merely to address the «political aspects of Security».

The effort was resumed in the context of the Genscher/Colombo plan. Here again, the discussion was difficult and often acrimonious, and it was not possible to achieve the breakthrough. When the «Solemn Declaration on European Union» was adopted in Stuttgart on 18th June 1983, Political Co-operation was mandated to discuss only the political and economic aspects of Security.

Efforts have therefore not been lacking to add a Security dimension to Europe of the Ten, now Twelve, particularly through European Political Co-operation.

None has yet really been wholly successful. While some have produced results not without significance, they have fallen short of what their promoters wanted and hoped for.

What were the reasons for this failure?

No doubt the memory of the failure of the E. D. C. has something to do with it. I remember a high-ranking Italian diplomat declaring, during the negotiations that originated out of the Genscher/Colombo initiative, «We all are widowers of the death of the European Defence Community.»

The chief obstacle, however, has been the negative stand taken by three Community partners: Ireland, Denmark and Greece. These countries, each for its own motives, have not found it possible to accept that the Ten, now Twelve, create a full Security dimension for themselves.

It is against this backdrop that the origin of the reactivation of Western European Union

must be seen, and an attempt made to understand its purpose and the substance of the tasks with which it has been entrusted by its member States.

The establishment of a European Union is the aim that the Twelve – and, among them, the Seven of the W.E.U. – have set for themselves.

The Ten – now Twelve – have so far succeeded in developing their economic dimension through the Communities and their Foreign-Policy dimension through Political Co-operation.

It is noteworthy, moreover, that because of the difficulties inherent in the construction of Europe these two dimensions have had to go within different frameworks, a supranational framework for the Communities and an intergovernmental framework for Political Co-operation. It is a fact that the task of building Europe has encountered several types of obstacles which forced it to grow in different directions depending on circumstances rather than logic, somewhat like a plant forced by stonework to grow in directions that nature did not intend.

So far, the Ten, now Twelve, have not succeeded in providing their Security dimension.

We have seen that the efforts in this connection have not been lacking, that they have failed either wholly or in part and that the most recent attempts have come up against the fact that three governments of the Ten – now Twelve – have found it impossible to go beyond a consultation on the political and economic aspects of security.

I believe that it is the accumulation of failures or half-failures in the attempts by the Ten to work truly in concert in the realm of security – as well as an increasing interest both by public opinion and governments in the problems relating to the defence of Europe – that essentially prompted the initiatives for reviving the Union. What could not be done among the Ten, the Seven decided at this point to do together, especially as they had the instrument available but which, up to that time, they had used only intermittently.

This is evident when one looks at the course of events.

The last half-failure – before the reactivation of the Western European Union – in trying to give the European Political Co-operation competency in the field of Security dates back to 18th June 1983, with the adoption of the Solemn Declaration of the European Union by the European Council, meeting in Stuttgart. It is in December 1983, already, that the attempts to relaunch the W.E.U. start.

French interest in the problems associated with European security had been evident for some time. At the beginning of February 1984, Paris circulated a memorandum to the member States of W.E.U. containing a number of proposals. The idea was that some

genuine tasks should be restored or rather given to the Organisation and that its rules and institutions should be adapted to the new circumstances and to the responsibilities proposed for it

An article by the Belgian Foreign Minister, M. Tindemans, published in *Le Monde* on 23rd December of the previous year, mooted a number of ideas very clearly anticipating the French document; shortly after the latter's publication, it was followed by a Belgian paper along the same lines as the French one but with additional suggestions.

From that time on the events were to proceed apace, and the relaunch of W.E.U. was agreed upon and set in train by three successive ministerial meetings, i.e.:

- A meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Paris on 12th June 1984;
- A meeting of the Foreign and Defence Ministers in Rome on 26th October 1984;
- A meeting of the Foreign and Defence Ministers in Bonn on 22nd April 1985.

It was the Rome meeting which adopted the Declaration which, in a way, is the «certificate of rebirth» for Western European Union.

The Declaration begins by affirming the member States' attachment to the Atlantic Alliance which 'had remained the foundation of European security for thirty-five years'. In this context, a better utilisation of W.E.U. will contribute not only to the security of Western Europe but also to an improvement in the common defence of all the countries of the Atlantic Alliance.

It then goes on to recall the need to make the best use, within the Atlantic framework, of existing resources through increased co-operation and, through W.E.U., to provide a political impetus to institutions of co-operation in the field of armaments. As is known, an effort is being made within the Alliance to improve the utilisation of existing resources through standardisation or the interoperability of armaments and also to put European industries on a better footing in relation to their American counterparts.

There is in fact a considerable imbalance between American and European supplies within the Alliance, the ratio being seven to one. Bodies such as Eurogroup or the Independent European Programme Group are devoting themselves to these problems. A group of countries whose industrial resources are fairly homogeneous, such as the member States of W.E.U., could be a driving force within these two bodies.

The Declaration then states that the Council of Western European Union, and in particular the Council of Ministers, will, accordingly, hold comprehensive discussions

and seek to harmonise the views of its members on the specific conditions of security in Europe. In particular:

- defence questions;
- arms control and disarmament;
- the effects of developments in East-West relations on the security of Europe;
- Europe's contribution to the strengthening of the Atlantic Alliance, bearing in mind the importance of transatlantic relations;
- the development of European co-operation in the field of armaments in respect of which W.E.U. can provide a political impetus.

The Council may also consider the implications for Europe of crises in other regions of the world.

Finally, the Declaration stresses the importance of the Assembly, which is «the only European parliamentary body mandated by Treaty to discuss defence matters». It notes that, as a privileged representative of public opinion, it has a special role to play in «consolidating the consensus among public opinions on their security and defence needs».

Let us note that in the meantime the discriminatory limitations imposed on armaments production in the Federal Republic of Germany were totally removed in 1984, the circumstances prevailing in 1954 – some ten years after the Second World War – having completely changed. Had not Bonn, in between, proved to be a true and solid democracy, an unrepachable ally and a major partner in the process of European construction.

It was thus unthinkable to maintain, in the perspective of a reactivation of W.E.U., the discriminatory rules which the Federal Republic of Germany had been subjected to by the Paris Agreement.

It is clear that the intention of the Rome Declaration in reactivating W.E.U. was to provide the Seven member countries with a forum for reflection and consultation on Security matters, a forum which must be in contact with European public opinion – principally through the Union's Assembly – and a forum which the Ten – now Twelve – have, so far, not been able to create among themselves.

Against this background, the reactivated W.E.U. stands as a clear beginning to a European Security dimension, as one of the elements in the process of the construction of between W.E.U. and the other two European dimensions – the

Communities and Political Co-operation.

The fact that Western European Union is thus one of the elements in the construction of Europe implies a series of consequences for that Organisation.

Consider the following:

First, there must be sustained co-ordination and co-operation between W.E.U. and the other two European dimensions – the Communities and Political Co-operation.

This means that the various bodies of the Ten and the Seven must define and implement the most suitable procedures for achieving such relations. The Council must be aware of this. The Secretariat-General of the Union and its Agencies must act accordingly. Nor is the matter of any less importance for the Assembly of W.E.U. which is «in the front line», directly exposed to public opinion whose active support is vital for the continuation and deepening of the process of European construction and, above all, for the successful development of a European Security dimension. Its relations with the European Parliament assume therefore more significance than ever.

Secondly, the accession of Spain and Portugal to the Communities and, as a consequence, their participation in European Political Co-operation, raises the problem of these two countries' relations with Western European Union. Lisbon, moreover, has already made a formal approach, and Madrid has let its interest be known for adhesion to W.E.U.

Lastly, if the reactivated W.E.U. is an element in the process of constructing Europe, any development of substance, any significant change in the evolution of European integration must inevitably have consequences for W E.U. also.

For if it were to be proved that today the Twelve as a whole were prepared, without any misgivings, to equip themselves with a true Security dimension, this would be a new development which would have a strong and immediate influence on the destiny of Western European Union which might have to ponder its future or its very existence. But if this is not the case – and the results of the Luxembourg European Council of 2nd-3rd December 1985 indicate that it is not the case for the time being – and as long as the present situation remains, our Organisation is the only European forum for reflection and concertation on Security problems and must fully assume this responsibility in close co-operation with all the other elements of our Europe.

But the reactivation of W.E.U. must also be seen in the context of the Atlantic Alliance.

Are not all its member States members of the Alliance and do not all their governments agree in considering and proclaiming that there can be no credible defence of the West

and hence of Western Europe without the Alliance?

The relaunch of the Western European Union must thus not be seen as something happening against the Alliance. The mere idea would be ridiculous as it would prove suicidal for the Seven. But it must also not be considered as occurring outside of the Alliance. All W.E.U. member States being also Atlantic partners, it is, in reality, in the framework of the Atlantic partnership that the reactivation of the Union must be perceived and implemented, as the beginning of a European pillar of the Alliance.

In this perspective, the relaunch of the W.E.U. – by strengthening, thanks to the development of such a pillar, the European side of the Atlantic partnership and thus creating within it a better balance – cannot fail, moreover, also to reinforce the Alliance significantly.

But if the new Western European Union is to be the beginning of a European pillar of the Atlantic partnership, it must have close contacts and most effective co-ordinated relations with the Alliance as such, and with each of the allies which are not included among the Seven.

As a matter of fact, an institutional link did already exist between NATO and W.E.U. before the latter was reactivated, as shown by Article IV of the Brussels Treaty as amended by the Paris Agreement².

But that relationship must, in the new circumstances, be further deepened and enlarged.

The question we must now ask finally, is whether the recently relaunched W. E. U. has proved in recent months that it is able to discharge the responsibility which has been given to it.

The direction it has given to its work and the rhythm and substance of that work – quite different from what existed before – lead me to think that the answer to this question is «yes».

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The reactivated Western European Union must justify its existence by actions and deeds. What it must deliver is the fruit of a joint reflection and concertation among its member States on the problems of Security, a co-

² Article IV

In the execution of the Treaty, the High Contracting Parties and any Organs established by Them under the Treaty shall work in close cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Recognising the undesirability of duplicating the military staffs of NATO, the Council and its Agency will rely on the appropriate military authorities of NATO for information and advice on military matters.

ordinated reaction to certain specific situations, arms co-operation, reflection on the questions of arms control, limitation and reduction etc.

It will do this by avoiding duplication with existing fora such as the Twelve and the Sixteen but, where its sphere of competence is close to, or overlaps, the responsibilities of these fora, it should seek to give an impetus.

Admittedly, the task is difficult if only because the problems to be tackled are themselves difficult and the attitudes of the States concerned do not necessarily converge.

Nevertheless, the initial results are encouraging.

Indeed, the work of the new W.E.U. has already begun.

Its Council has started at ministerial level and at Permanent Representative level, with the assistance of experts where appropriate, to reflect on the essential problems facing each of our States, such as the Strategic Defence Initiative – seen in particular from the point of view of the invitation from the United States' Government to our governments to participate in the research programme – or the state of East-West relations.

Reflection on this subject was sufficiently structured and detailed to give rise to first conclusions and it was in Rome, on 14th November 1985, the will of the Ministers that this should be taken further and developed, and this is being done with the help of W.E.U. Ministerial organs reshaped to meet the Organisation's new objectives.

In between, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union has held its last bi-annual full session for 1985 in Paris in December. It is a fact that it has – namely through the voice of its President, M. Jean-Marie Caro – shown itself impatient to see the governments of the member countries act more vigorously in the implementation of W.E.U. reactivation and has sometimes complained bitterly that, in its opinion, things are not moving as they should.

This is, however, a healthy phenomenon. In the work of European construction. it is indeed the role of the people's representatives to act both as constructive censors of and as active catalysts for all participating governments.

It was all the more the case in respect of this last full 1985 session of the Assembly that it succeeded moreover in carrying out very substantive work on essential problems like the S.D.I. project and to pursue with the four participating ministers (Lady Young for Great Britain, M. Dumas for France, Messrs. Andreotti and Spadolini for the Italian presidency of the Union) an animated and promising dialogue.

Of course, the Western European Union's relaunch has just begun. The new W.E.U.

will have to prove itself in the years to come and the member States will have to show that they have and keep the political will to realise what was agreed in Rome in October 1985.

At this stage, they have some two years to do so before, as has already been foreseen, the participating governments review the way of working and the accomplishments of the Organisation.

In his *mémoires*, the great European, Jean Monnet, referring to the difficult process of European construction says «The path ahead must be opened a day at a time, the most important thing being to have an objective clear enough not to be lost sight of». This is not a bad prescription for the process as a whole, and certainly a good one for the reactivated Western European Union.