



European Security and Defence Assembly Assembly of Western European Union

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Assembly in favour of closer EU-NATO cooperation

Paris, 3 December 2010 – The European Security and Defence Assembly (ESDA) said on Thursday it was in favour of closer political and military cooperation between the EU and NATO. The Atlantic Alliance had adopted its new Strategic Concept a few days earlier at the Lisbon Summit, against a background of economic crisis and budgetary constraints.

Submitting a report entitled “**The NATO Strategic Concept and evolution of NATO**” on behalf of the Defence Committee, the **Earl of DUNDEE** (United Kingdom, Federated Group) noted that the Alliance’s new Strategic Concept urged a comprehensive approach to post-conflict management and crisis prevention. The Earl of DUNDEE welcomed the “effective partnerships” NATO had already put in place with Russia and in the Middle East and Asia, adding that “future partners might well come to include India and China”. He underlined the importance of sharing a “joint vision and common purpose” and of improved coordination of “political, civilian and military efforts”.

Co-Rapporteur **Mr René ROUQUET** (France, Socialist Group) said that the new Strategic Concept represented a twofold challenge: “that of adapting to real and new threats and that of the partnership with the European Union”. He regretted that “while the new concept stresses the importance of a strengthened partnership, that partnership is not mentioned until the 32nd paragraph of the Lisbon Summit declaration”. He underlined that there was a risk that developing NATO missions might have the “unfortunate consequence of diluting the European defence identity within the Alliance”. Mr ROUQUET cited the security and defence agreement signed between France and the United Kingdom on 2 November as “an example of enhanced cooperation that could be extended to other EU countries”.

The Assembly recommended raising “the level of the political and military debate between NATO and the EU by including within it such major strategic issues as nuclear weapons in Europe and the territorial missile defence of the member states”. It also called for closer cooperation in common capabilities, which required resolving “the political divergences among the member states of the EU and NATO which are an obstacle to full cooperation and to the natural interdependence between the two organisations”.

Submitting a related report on transatlantic relations in the field of security and defence on behalf of the Political Committee, **Mrs Elsa PAPADIMITRIOU** (Greece, EPP/CD) said that it was “highly important for the EU to elaborate its common security and defence policy while defining common challenges and interests with the United States”. Deploring the shortcomings in Europe’s foreign policy, she added that when the United States showed an interest in listening to Europe, it heard “the echoes of European divergence”. Given that the transatlantic partnership remained essential, she felt that Europe had “not managed to achieve a consensus” on developing that partnership and “very little progress has been made in the wording of successive European treaties towards a common European defence”.

In the ensuing joint debate, **Mr João MOTA AMARAL** (Portugal, EPP/CD) said that no one could “pretend to believe that we have a real common defence policy, when none of the other European states were told in advance of the security and defence agreement concluded between France and the United Kingdom”.

Mrs Josette DURRIEU (France, Socialist Group) felt that “the ultimate goal of European integration in the field of security remained ambiguous” despite the fact that the institutions and capability instruments required for a European security and defence policy had been developed over the years. “For the time being, NATO remains the military instrument for the collective defence of the Euro-Atlantic area”, she added, saying that “the EU must develop its own particular security model, based on European added value”.