

Working Group VIII

Working document 14

## **WORKING GROUP VIII « DEFENCE »**

**Subject :** Note by Mr Valdo SPINI

Members of the Working Group will find attached a note by Mr Valdo Spini, alternate member of the Convention.

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## **European Defence**

Mr. Valdo Spini would like to apologize to Commissioner Michel Barnier for being absent today 4 November 2002 due to the beginning of the Budget session. He wishes to transmit some preliminary remarks.

### Introduction:

Defence is the most recent theme that was included in the Union's sphere of competence, under the Amsterdam and Nice Treaties (the ESDP – European Security and Defence Policy). Nevertheless, it is a theme of crucial importance for the development of Europe's political role.

To this end, the attainment of the "Headline Goal" set by the European Council of Helsinki (December 1999) is of the utmost importance, since it envisages the establishment, by the year 2003, of a Rapid Reaction Force capable to deploy up to 15 brigades (50,000-60,000 strong) within sixty days notice. This force could be assigned to the fulfilment of the so-called "Petersberg missions". In order to establish such a force, it is necessary to resort to NATO assets. Therefore it is necessary to assess progress with a view to achieving the relevant agreements as well as possible hindrances.

In the last few weeks, NATO has also decided to establish its own smaller rapid reaction force. We therefore wonder which will be the concrete relationship between these two forces, in particular considering that they will probably consist of the same units that European countries can place at the disposal of the European Rapid Reaction Force.

The following are some preliminary comments:

- It would be quite in order to discuss the possibility to broaden the Petersberg tasks to respond to the current threats to security. It would be in fact quite inappropriate dangerous to endorse in any way a more restrictive interpretation of the notion of "crisis management", which can also include a possible specification of these tasks.
- Undoubtedly each member state should be encouraged to accept commitments and convergence criteria. This would bestow credibility on the ESDP.
- Enhanced cooperation within the ESDP is necessary as well as "opting out" mechanisms. An example would be mission Alba to Albania (1997) in which some countries, such as Italy and France, took part, while some others, like Germany and Great Britain, did not. Actually, Alba was a European mission (the USA did not participate directly), but it could not be carried out under the aegis of the European Union.
- As for the role of the High Representative for the CFSP, this will hinge upon the configuration that the overall architecture of the new Constitutional Treaty will envisage. In principle, it would be advisable to designate a deputy to the High Representative for CFSP who would be specifically responsible for the ESDP. Should the role of the High Representative for CFSP be strengthened and the European defence policy developed, the appointment of a High Representative for the ESDP could be recommended.
- The establishment of a European Armaments Agency - which could include the current institutions such as OCCAR - is to be strongly recommended and included in the protocols annexed to the Treaties.

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