

Working Group VIII

Working document 29

WORKING GROUP VIII « DEFENCE »

Subject : **Comments by Mr Rihards Piks to the preliminary draft final report of
Working Group VIII "Defence" (WD 022)**

Members of Working Group VIII will find attached comments by Mr Rihards Piks, member of the Convention, on the preliminary draft final report.

**Comments by Mr Rihards Piks,
Latvian Parliament Representative to the Working Group “Defence”
regarding the proposal from the Chairman for a Preliminary draft Report
from the Working Group (WD22)**

1. Crisis Management/Institutional Framework

Latvia appreciates Union’s discussion on the future of ESDP and fully supports any efforts to intensify cooperation and promote efficiency in the field of crisis management. Efficient and swift decision making process along with coordination of efforts and actions among numerous EU structures are essential for this purpose.

2. The response to the new threat

Since 9/11 the world has acknowledged that “modern threats” are not constituted by any single state or group of states. Threat of terror and weapons of mass destruction do not limit itself to the borders of one state. In this regard it is of utmost importance to pool the efforts and capabilities of the EU. Moreover, cooperation with other democratic international organizations would substantially contribute to the result. As many of the EU states are also NATO members, they have committed themselves to the fight against terrorism. However, creation of the new structures could diffuse efficiency. Establishment of the additional institutions for decision-making and coordination shall be avoided. Specialization of the Union in coordination with other institutions in “uncovered” areas would be of highest importance, for example, in civil protection area.

3. Petersberg missions

The Union’s ability to carry out its commitments and undertakings could be examined before assuming the new tasks. Definition of the goals and search for the members’ ability to contribute have proved itself as process of long discussions prior any joint actions can be taken. I think, that the process could be turned in opposite way: first, evaluation of capabilities and then adding the new commitments to the list of Petersberg tasks.

Closer cooperation on defence policy matters is an important issue for further development of ESDP. However, creation of defence “Euro zone” could draw a clear division line between EU member states being part of “defence union” and those being outside. That would not foster cooperation, mutual trust and solidarity among member states. *De facto* that would lead to creation of two level memberships within the EU.

4. Capabilities and armaments

A number of EU members have already assumed their obligations in the field of capabilities within NATO. For those EU members being part of NATO decisions regarding armaments, GDP devoted to the defence is decision on national level, however, already harmonized with existing obligations. Duplication of efforts and resources by creating separate EU structures would not benefit to the capabilities of EU members to contribute to common undertakings.