

## Address by Klaus Bühler on the 10th anniversary of the Petersberg Declaration (Paris, 19 June 2002)

**Caption:** Address given on 19 June 2002 by Klaus Bühler, President of the Assembly of Western European Union (WEU), to mark the 10th anniversary of the Petersberg Declaration.

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## Address by the President, Mr Klaus Bühler Mdb on the 10th anniversary of the Petersberg Declaration, 19 June 2002

*Check against delivery!*

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me, following the meeting of our Presidential Committee, to be able to welcome so many Ambassadors and representatives from the WEU countries, as well as representatives of the EU Institute for Security Studies. We have invited you to this little ceremony to give you the opportunity, together with parliamentarians from the WEU countries, to commemorate the ground-breaking decision that was taken 10 years ago to the day, on 19 June 1992, by the WEU Ministerial Council at Petersberg near Bonn.

The WEU member states decided on that occasion to make their armed forces available to WEU, not only for collective defence missions but also for humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking, and to build the necessary operational capabilities for that purpose.

Although even at that time there had already been some painful experience of international terrorism, it was not so much that threat that governments had in mind, as that of the emergence of numerous ethnic and other regional conflicts. Above all the bloody conflict in the Balkans, which led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, brought with it hitherto unknown challenges for Europe.

The disagreement that reigned not only among the European countries, but also among the whole international community represented in the United Nations, about the nature of the conflict and the means of settling it, was the main reason for the failure to avoid the countless victims it claimed, before NATO - with the help of the United States - was at last able to put an end to it. It was unfortunately the case that even during the tragedy in the Balkans there was a consistent lack of the necessary political will on the part of all the European countries to make use of WEU, which by then was operational, for the full range of the so-called Petersberg missions. The important thing, however, is that the painful experience of the conflict in the Balkans in no way led to the 1992 Petersberg decisions themselves being called into question. On the contrary, they became an integral part of the Treaty on European Union.

In 1999 the European governments went a step further and transferred responsibility for the exercise of the Petersberg tasks from WEU to the European Union. Now we must make every effort to ensure that the EU's plan to develop its own European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and to assume the Petersberg crisis-management tasks that governments were in the past unwilling to entrust to WEU does not founder.

Indeed, the European Union now has an additional problem to deal with, which is to decide what practical conclusions must be drawn for its future ESDP from the acts of terror perpetrated on 11 September 2001. The question of how to combat international terrorism most effectively is a burning issue between the United States and the European states, and among the European countries themselves, while the danger of regional conflicts and crises has in no way diminished. Further efforts are needed to build peace in the Balkans. A particularly important question is whether the European Union will be able in the autumn to take over the NATO peacekeeping mission in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Middle East conflict has flared up again, while the situation in Iraq, the Caspian Sea region and Afghanistan remains precarious. And finally, India and Pakistan recently came within a hair's breadth of military conflict, with the risk of recourse to nuclear weapons.

We have to adjust to the fact that the United States is approaching many potential or actual crises primarily from the angle of its war on international terrorism. Precisely with regard to those issues, it is of the utmost importance that the broadest possible agreement be reached among the Europeans and with the Americans. This means that a great deal remains to be done in order to iron out, or reduce, the numerous differences that exist.

The European Union has already made it clear in numerous declarations, but also through practical measures, that it wishes to place the main focus of its efforts against terrorism on international political dialogue and internationally coordinated measures in the field of justice, internal security and financial policy, as well as humanitarian aid. The European Council's Laeken Declaration and the common positions it agreed at the end of December are to be seen in that light.

But where do we stand as regards the fight against terrorism using military means? So far the European Union has confined itself to verbal declarations of solidarity with the United States. The discussion about the consequences of the terrorist threat for the ESDP has not so far yielded any tangible results. It is regrettable that the European Council has not given the Spanish Presidency any mandate to delve into this issue. Yet the questions that need to be asked are quite clear:

- do the Petersberg tasks need to be redefined?
- does the scope of the ESDP framework need to be broadened to include the fight against terrorism, and if so, will this call for additional financial means?
- are we dealing here with a completely new type of threat that must be countered using means which have nothing to do with the Petersberg tasks and/or the ESDP?

NATO seems to have drawn totally different conclusions from the events of 11 September than has the EU. Indeed, its reaction was to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which refers to the right to individual and collective self-defence that is enshrined in the UN Charter. According to its Secretary-General, NATO is preparing to adopt a new military defence concept for the fight against terrorism at its next Summit in Prague.

The European Union is faced with the decision of whether the efforts to combat acts of terror in Europe with military means should be left entirely to NATO, or whether it should, as called for by the WEU Assembly in Recommendation 706, broaden the ESDP framework and increase its military capabilities accordingly. Improved intelligence is but one small example from the list of measures that need to be taken.

We in the Assembly strongly support the appeal of Spanish Defence Minister F. Trillo for "more Europe" in the field of defence policy. However, it must be made clear at EU level what this means in practical terms. The forthcoming EU Summit in Seville needs to give a clear signal here. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to submit the following recommendations to the European heads of state and government:

All possible precautions must be taken to avert an attack from abroad like that of 11 September against targets in Europe. It must be clearly established that such an attack would trigger the right to individual and collective self-defence, a right which may also be exercised outside Europe;

The EU has to decide whether it wishes to combat worldwide terrorism using military, in addition to political, means. If so, then the fight against terrorism must be added to the aims of the ESDP. It needs to draw up its own military concept enabling it, where necessary, to intervene when NATO as a whole is not engaged. The EU must quickly examine the question of whether additional financial means are required for that purpose;

Not every regional conflict necessarily gives rise to terrorist activities. The EU must step up its efforts to become operational across the full spectrum of Petersberg missions and demonstrate the political will to take on such missions;

If the EU is not soon able to define an inclusive model acceptable to all European NATO partners for participation in the ESDP, and in EU-led peacekeeping missions in particular, then it will face a serious

problem. The alternative, which would be to envisage autonomous EU operations using national headquarters or even developing European command structures, is politically too controversial and technically not sufficiently well prepared to be seriously entertained. If such a solution were to serve to exclude certain partners it would divide Europeans and weaken NATO as a whole. However, a solution that entailed developing the European Security and Defence Identity exclusively within NATO would mean the end of the ESDP. We therefore hope that all EU member states agree that appropriate arrangements to enable participation of the European NATO partners and ensure smooth cooperation between the EU and NATO are decisive factors for the future of the ESDP.

Moreover, the political credibility of the ESDP depends on the unreserved support of all 15 EU member states. It would not be conducive to such credibility if the EU were to grant special arrangements not only for Denmark but also other states such as Ireland.

As long as the problems of participation have not been completely solved, the EU should not allow itself to be pressurised by time constraints as regards its planned takeover of the mission in Macedonia from NATO. Such a takeover must not become an end in itself. We in the Assembly will continue to support any solution which brings us closer to a security and defence Europe that includes all European states wishing to be a part of it.