

Notes of the Meeting of The European Convention, 20 December 2002.

Ben Crum (CEPS), 7 January 2003.¹

The last Convention meeting of 2002 covered one full day and was mainly dedicated to a joint debate on the reports of the Working Group on External Action and of the Working Group on Defence. Both reports were marked by some hard fought compromises that should enable the Union to move forward in these fields. While several conventioners observed that the proposals put forward still fell short of delivering on the high expectations put on the Union, fundamental disagreement remained on some key issues. This applied in particular to the proposal of an European External Representative who would take over the tasks of the current High Representatives and those of the Commissioner for External Relations.

Other issues that remained far from settled concerned the possible extension of qualified majority voting (qmv) in external action and the organisation of parliamentary involvement in this field. There was wide support for extending the possibilities of enhanced cooperation in both external action and defence. At the same time various conventioners wanted to have such possibilities strictly contained as to prevent them from undermining the integrity of the Union. On the other hand there was a minority advocating to move on with a common external and defence policy along a similar phased path like monetary integration.

Turning to defence there appeared consensual support for the adoption of a 'solidarity clause' and the establishment of an European Armaments and Strategic Research Agency, and a big majority in favour of updating the Petersburg tasks. However, fundamental disagreements appeared when it came to a mutual defence clause and the question whether Europe's defence budgets need to be boosted. Furthermore, the question of the nature of the relation between the EU defence policy and Nato remained eventually unanswered.

Convention work programme 2003

The meeting started with Valéry Giscard d'Estaing outlining the Convention's work programme for 2003. Basically there remain two main tasks before the Convention: formulating concrete texts for the Constitutional Treaty and debating the organisation of the Union's institutions. The session of 20/21 January will be dedicated to a free and open debate on the institutions. To structure this debate, the Praesidium will provide for a kind of scheme around 10 January. One leftover is the report of Social Europe that is scheduled to be discussed at the session of 5 and 6 February. At the same session there will also be a debate on Regional Europe.

The Praesidium has asked the secretariat to start working on article texts for the Constitutional Treaty. Giscard asserted that the text of the Constitutional Treaty would need to combine precision with lyricism; it would have to convey poetry as well as force. The first draft articles should be available by the end of January. These will then be debated at the second session of February. As far as Part I of the Treaty, the Constitutional structure, is concerned, the work will probably proceed in three phases:

¹ These notes are based on the observation of the Convention's session. They are not corroborated by the minutes. Their main aim is to complement the official notes of the Convention's secretary with a view of the political dynamics in the Convention. The notes are not meant for quotation. Though utmost care has been taken to give a correct rendering of the various contributions, the author cannot guarantee the absence of mistakes.

- Titles I – III (arts. 1-13) (to be discussed in February)
- Titles V, VII, IX mainly on institutions (to be presented in February)
- The remaining titles IV, VI, VIII and X (to be presented in March/April)

On the basis of the debate, the drafted texts will be revised. If in the plenary debate fundamental disagreement emerges on a proposed text, discussion groups will be set up. These discussion groups will be of a smaller size than the former working groups. They will need to represent the various views on an issue and are expected to report to the plenary on their debate and their conclusions.

At the same time, work will proceed on the second part of the Constitutional Treaty on Union Policies. This work is above all of a technical nature. It will follow the content of the current Treaty provisions but simplify them and bring them in order with the proposed Constitutional structure. The Convention will be continuously informed on the progress of this work, starting with a first overview in January. Basically this overview will order all articles and their sources in the current treaties. For each topic one of four options will apply: a. copy articles from current Treaties; b. delete articles; c. draft new articles; and d. amend existing texts.

External Action and Defence

The plenary debate started with an introduction of the reports by the chairmen of the two working groups. With regard to the report on External Action (CONV 459/02) Jean-Luc Dehaene noted that its recommendations reflected mostly trends in the working group rather than actual consensus. A basic conclusion of the working group had been that the current competencies in external action did not need to be revised, but on the point where jurisprudence had asserted that existing internal competencies need to be complemented by corresponding external competencies. Further, much of the debate had focused on the question how to secure optimal coordination among the whole range of external instruments and especially between those powers that had been communitarised and those that are intergovernmental in character. As a solution to this question the proposal of an European External Representative with a double mandate had emerged.

In introducing the report of the Working Group of Defence (CONV 461/02), chairman Michel Barnier underlined the importance of an objective and precise approach to this topic. He noted furthermore the great diversity amongst the member states when it came to defence policy. On many issues the working group had been unable to reach a consensus. Throughout the report Barnier had sought to indicate as precisely as possible the degree of support for the various positions and he ensured that the main conclusions could rely on broad support. However, to have insisted on consensus would have led to rather minimalist conclusions. Instead Barnier had sought for what he called a ‘dynamic compromise’ aiming at the strengthening of the EU’s credibility in defence. Underlying the conclusions Barnier detected a dual approach. On the one hand they were aimed at a mobilisation of shared commitments. On the other they would allow those member states that wished to do so to carry their operations forward together, on the condition, however, that they would not undermine the overall European political project.

While few Conventioneers recognised the reports as fully reflecting their preferred position, there was much praise for the ways in which the Working Groups had been able to wrangle out the ‘maximal compromises’ (Timmermans) achievable. Only a single Conventioneer (Skaarup (DK, NMP)) spoke against them as going much too far, arguing that external action should remain the preserve of member states and that international defence policy was to be developed exclusively

within the framework of Nato. On the other hand, a significant number of Conventioneers (Haenel, Cushman, Borrell, Severin, Farnleitner) asserted that the recommendations did not go far enough to meet the international challenges Europe currently faces. In particular it was observed that these recommendations fall far short of satisfying the high expectations of European citizens have of European power in the world (according to opinion polls). Farnleitner (Ös, gov) wondered whether CFSP could only be carried further after severe international crises.

However, Peter Hain (UK, gov) insisted that the presented recommendations were at the limits of the ambitions that could be commonly realised. He made it quite clear that communitarisation of the CFSP could not be the way forward. In particular he observed that when it would come to EU military action, there is only a limited number of member states that actually commit soldiers. It would be inconceivable that these states could be overruled in political decision-making.

Several conventioneers argued that the reports presented still a rather narrow-minded and technical view of external action (e.g. Martikonis (Lit, Gov)). Andrew Duff (MEP, UK) lamented the absence of clearly defined and substantive strategic EU objectives. Cushman (MEP, Irl) argued for an external policy actively oriented towards the promotion of values, such as human rights and non-proliferation, across the world. Maij-Weggen (MEP, NL) advocated the inclusion of good governance and minority rights in the principles of EU External action. Sylvia Kaufmann (MEP, D) suggested, furthermore, adding disarmament, conflict prevention and strengthening of the UN to the list. Serracino-Inglott (MTA, Gov) adopted a proposal by Pascal Andreani (F, Agov) to include the “promotion and preservation of cultural diversity” as a principle for EU external action. Several conventioneers (Hjelm-Wallén, McAvan) noted that so far EU’s external action still lacked coherence across the board, for instance the incompatibility of the CAP with the development objectives. McAvan (MEP, UK) insisted that EU development policies should not be used to further foreign policy aims but should focus exclusively on poverty eradication. Dastis (SP, Agov) responded to this that the eradication of poverty should not be seen as a specifically external objective but rather as a general commitment of all Union policy, internal as well as external. Lopes (P, gov) argued for a better coordination between European and member states’ development policies.

Duff noted that the presumed distinction between external action and defence was no more than theoretical and impossible to sustain in practice. Carrying this point further other conventioneers (de Rossa, Hjelm-Wallén) insisted on considering defence as only a specific part of the CFSP. In response, Dehaene conceded that the connecting points between external action and defence need to further clarification and Barnier added that measures would need to be taken to ensure for coherence between CFSP and the EU defence policy.

Several conventioneers (Avgerinos, Balázs, Hänsch, Kristensen) noted that EU external action eventually lapsed on member states’ lack of political will to act together. Alain Lamassoure (MEP, F) noted that the debate on External action remains handicapped by a number of taboos that also the two reports under discussion failed to address properly. As examples he mentioned the French nuclear capacity, the neutrality of certain member states and the variety of views on the transatlantic relationship (on the latter, also Katiforis).

European External Representative

Dehaene defended the proposal of the European External Representative (EER) with a double mandate as a balanced compromise that would allow the EU's external action to move forward. He added that the bringing together of two mandates in one person would be a means to prevent conflicting policies.

In the debate the precariousness of this compromise clearly emerged. While a majority of the Convention appeared to support the proposal of the EER (including Fini, Figel, Yaki, Berès, Santer, Meyer, Akcam, Kohout, Fischer), there were indeed few dedicated supporters of this idea. Several conventioners (van der Linden) noted that in the working group the option (2) of a full merger of the HR in the Commission had received the most support. However, most of these conventioners (e.g. Christophersen, Attalides, Brok, Hänsch, Borrell, Kauppi, Lennmarker) were willing to accept the compromise of the proposed EER, as they recognised option 2 to be politically unfeasible.

Even among this majority disagreements remained, in particular regarding the question whether or not the EER should chair the External relations Council. On the one hand there were those (most emphatically the French: Lequiller, Berès, de Villepin; and Fischer) who insisted that this should be the case. Lequiller argued for an EER who should develop into a European foreign minister proper with command over appropriate resources to fulfil this task. But then again, de Villepin (F, gov) continued, would this foreign minister who would also chair the external relations council, need to be a member of the Commission? On the other hand, however, government representatives Christophersen (DK) and Roche (Irl) specified that this EER should remain clearly under the political direction of the Council, that s/he should *not* chair the external affairs council and that the post should be severed from that of secretary-general of the Council.

The support for the EER fell short of a consensus as two groups retained serious doubts about it. On the one hand there were those (most prominently the British: Hain, Stuart, McAvan; but also Hjelm-Wallén (Sw, gov), Dastis (SP, Agov), Hololei (Est, Agov), Kelemen (HG, ANMP)) who tended to prefer to retain the present distinction between HR and Commissioner for External Affairs (option 1). Lena Hjelm-Wallén (Sw, gov) was even more outspoken as she considered a double mandate unacceptable as it would only create problems. She insisted that the EU's foreign representation needs to be a council representative and that the roles of the Council and the Commission are to be kept strictly apart in this respect (cf. Kelemen, McAvan). Hain raised some concerns that had also been raised by the testimony given by Javier Solana: how are conflicts between the two mandates to be resolved? Can this person still be trusted to mediate between Commission and Council? What about the HR's competencies in defence? If the distinction between HR and Commissioner for External Affairs would be retained, the HR could come to have a right of initiative in the CFSP. The HR should also become responsible for coordinating military operations, while the governments would stay in control through the Political and Security Committee. In any case, in Hain's (and Stuart's) view there could be no 'double-hatting' without a more permanent Union presidency. Dastis (SP, Agov) echoed this link while adding that the EER should in his view not get the task of chairing the External Relations Council.

The other group opponents of the EER-proposal consisted mainly of MEPs. Andrew Duff warned that, while an EER serving two masters would not be impossible in principle, it was improbable to work in practice. He pointed in particular at the difficult position of the EER in the Commission when s/he would act on a mandate of the Council (cf. Maij-Weggen). Lamassoure added that an EER with a double mandate was likely only to exacerbate the deeper problems that hinder

European external action rather than solving them. As an example he pointed at the lack of power the EER would have in influencing European positions in the UN Security Council.

A number of conventioners noted that the Convention would need to reconsider the proposal of the EER later on in the context of the wider debate of the future of the EU presidency (Kristensen). Wittbrodt (NMP, Pol) spoke out in favour of reforming the presidency in a team-presidency of a troika of member states while at the same time integrating the HR in the Commission. Fischer (D, gov) argued instead for abolishing the troika altogether. On this point Dehaene agreed that the organisation of external action would eventually need to be reconsidered in the light of the overall institutional structure emerging from the work of the Convention.

Decision-making

The question of the EER points at the deeper question of how competencies in external action are to be distributed between Council and Commission. Lord MacLennan (UK, ANMP) underlined the importance of removing the adversary relation that currently exists between the two institutions. Andrew Duff noted that the relationship between Council and Commission remained problematical in both reports. Tiilikainen warned for the risk of double structures emerging in the Commission and the Council secretariat.

There appeared wide agreement on the need for a clarification of the division of labour between the institutions in this field (Brok, Yaki, Fischer). It was submitted (Tiilikainen, Lennmarker) that all preparatory and representative tasks in external action should be delegated to the Commission while leaving the eventual decision-making firmly in the hands of the Council (cf. Fogler). Several conventioners (Avgerinos, Santer, Akcam, Kohout) advocated the establishment of a specialised External Affairs Council fully disconnected from the General Affairs Council. Similarly, the establishment of a separate Defence Council was advocated (Fogler, Muñoz Alonso). Avgerinos (Gr, NMP) also insisted on the importance of really joining all external policies together under one decision-making framework. At the same time Fischer (gov, D) underlined the importance of keeping the external action institutions and procedures separate from the other Union policies.

Several MEP's (Cushanan, Brok, Almeida Garrett) advocated fusing the administrative staff of Council and Commission involved with external action. Brok considered such a fusion essential to making the position of EER work, as was also affirmed by Barnier. Several conventioners (Dini, Figel and Szent-Iványi) expressed their support for the proposal to grant the HR or future EER a right of initiative to table (legislative) proposals.

Dehaene noted that for the moment the Working Group had not been able to extend qmv in new areas of External action. However, the need for such extension was clearly recognised. Besides the strategies currently available, the Working Group therefore also proposed to adopt an enabling clause that would allow the European Council to extend qmv whenever and wherever it would deem that appropriate. He added that eventually the political will to accept compromises is more important than the formal procedures in force.

Most Conventioners argued that qmv needed to be extended in external action. As Elmar Brok (MEP, D) put it: "Only qmv will make the EU effective in the world" (cf. Almeida Garrett, Meyer). Various conventioners (Serracino-Inglott, Brok) pointed to the external commercial policy as a field where qmv is long overdue. Hololei (Est, Agov) added development policy as a field where

qmv might well be adopted. Meyer reiterated his proposal to replace unanimity by a supermajority of 75% of the member states representing 75% of the European population.

Others went even further by arguing that qmv should become the rule in external action. Exceptions to this rule would only be allowed in 'defence' or 'military matters' (Fischer, van der Linden, Dini, Cushanan), 'crisis management' (Kelemen) or 'matters touching upon member states' vital/strategic interests' (Fini, Avgerinos). Government representatives Michel (B) and Fischer (D) argued that the adoption of qmv would facilitate the emergence of a consensus among the member states. Michel advocated the extension of qmv in all issues relating to the common commercial policy and on legislative initiatives of the future HR. To this some (de Vries) added, that qmv might also apply to joint initiatives by the HR and the Commission or by the future EER (cf. Kohout).

On the other hand Peter Hain warned for the risks of alienating member states from EU policies if they would be agreed by qmv. With other government representatives (Attalides (Cyp), Balázs (HG), Hjelm-Wallén (Sw), but also Figel (SLK, NMP)) he argued to stick to the current provisions for allowing qmv in external action, to which some (Balázs, Hjelm-Wallén) added that in particular the use of common strategies merited further exploration. In time, with ever evolving policies, the enabling clause could be used to extend qmv.

In defence matters, Conventioneers (van der Linden, Dini, Dastis) underlined the importance of constructive abstention to ease decision-making. Lopes (P, gov) suggested that constructive abstention might even be used in even a more flexible manner. On the other hand, Figel suggested that the use of constructive abstention should be restricted to operational matters only.

As Carnero (MEP, Sp) observed, while the reports seek to increase the effectiveness of the Union's external policies, they do nothing to increase their democracy and transparency. Dehaene underlined the importance of the EP making optimal use of Article 21 TEU. Many parliamentarians (Cushanan, Hänsch, Carnero, Almeida Garrett, Muscardini, Timmermans, van der Linden; but also Yaki) advocated a formal strengthening of the EP involvement in external action. For a start Art. 21 TEU should be extended and further substantiated (Brok, Carnero). Barnier noted that in the field of ESDP the accountability of the HR could be increased. In particular decisions with financial implications should always involve the EP as the authority on EU expenditure (Brok, Berès, Almeida Garrett). Carnero wanted the EP to be consulted on the appointment of the HR and to approve any deployment of the EU's rapid reaction force. Cushanan added the importance of the EP being involved in the adoption of common strategies. Wittbrodt (Pol, NMP) called for an annual CFSP-debate in the EP, while the CFSP should become part of the EU-budget as well.

Several Conventioneers (Michel, Cushanan) insisted on the EP's involvement in the agreement of international treaties. Most specifically Carnero and McAvan demanded ex ante consultation and ex post assent powers. MacCormick suggested that international trade negotiations should be carried out on the basis of a mandate adopted through the normal legislative procedure.

Several national parliamentarians argued for further involvement of national parliaments in the EU's external action (Haenel, Timmermans). John Bruton advocated interparliamentary cooperation on defence issues in particular. Meyer submitted that national parliaments should retain the decisive voice on military deployment of national soldiers. He (and Spini) moreover observed that the parliamentary assembly of the WEU was bound to wither away and that the EP would need to take its place. Dehaene agreed that the role of national parliaments needed further elaboration.

Enhanced cooperation

Many argued that greater opportunities for enhanced cooperation were needed in external action and defence (Haenel, Fogler, Brok, de Vries, Hänsch, Bruton, Fini, Kauppi, Szent-Iványi, Muñoz Alonso, Kohout, Fischer; one explicit voice contra: Lekberg). However, there was the fear that by introducing enhanced cooperation the EU's external policy might fragment in many small and ad hoc parts (Korhonen). Lopes (P, gov) underlined the importance that any form of enhanced cooperation should be open to all member states in principle, a point that Barnier was happy to endorse. Fini (It, gov) added the conditions that enhanced cooperation should not lead to the creation of new bodies and that it would preserve member states full rights to opt out or to invoke safeguard clauses when their vital interests would be at stake. Michel (B, gov) insisted that enhanced cooperation would only be useful if it were really profound and comprehensive with regard to the development of a common defence policy rather than focussing on ad hoc coalitions on certain specific issues.

At the same time, fears were expressed that by acting under enhanced cooperation a subset of member states' action might come to compromise the EU as a whole. Tiilikainen (Fi, gov) emphasised that any form of enhanced cooperation should proceed within the Treaty framework. She further insisted that crisis management missions should not be undertaken without the support of a substantive majority of member states. Otherwise they might well harm the image of the Union as a whole. This concern was recognised by Barnier. On the other hand, Spini (It, ANMP) pointed out that if member states were to undertake military action outside of the Treaty, the EU might well fail to receive the credit and credibility it actually deserved for the efforts undertaken (e.g. the involvement in Albania).

Several Conventioneers (Spini, de Vries, Fini, Berès, Maior) spoke in favour of a European defence area that might be constructed in a similar way as the Euro-zone. Most concretely French MEP Alain Lamassoure (cf. Lequiller) argued for copying the whole process of monetary integration by adopting a phased calendar with concrete reference points for developing the Common Foreign and Security Policy (seconded by Timmermans as the 'ideal line'). As an objection to this model Fayot (Lux, NMP) raised the possibility that, like in the Euro-zone, (small) member states might be excluded from the European defence area not only for lack of willingness but also for lack of capabilities.

External representation and services

Santer (Lux, gov) insisted on the importance of a single external representation of the EU in as many fields as possible. In particular he advocated an unrestricted mandate for the Commission in international trade policy and a revision of article 111 TEC on international negotiations. Farnleitner (ÖS, gov) supported the proposal to strive for a single representation of the Euro-group in the International Financial Institutions (IFI's). Dini (It, NMP) pointed out that this proposal involved some practical problems as the representation in the IFI's corresponded to financial reservations within the national budgets.

Dick Roche (Irl, gov) recognised the desirability of single EU-representation in international organisations, even though he anticipated some serious practical complications. Some conventioneers pointed out that the Union's political presence in the world might well benefit from a more permanent presidency. On the other hand Peter Hain insisted that reducing the number of European representatives in international organisations was unlikely to strengthen Europe's position. Instead coordination of standpoints is essential. The chair of the Council and the HR might contribute to this by improving coordination in the preparation of international summits. Similarly Dervis (TK, NMP)

and Kiljunen (Fi, NMP) considered that coordinating national positions in international organisations may be more advantageous than the full integration of the European representation. Dehaene responded that it was a misunderstanding to think that the Europe would lose seats in international organisations as was illustrated by the WTO where national delegations continued to operate besides the Union delegation. This system might for a start be extended to cover international trade in services as well as the trade in goods.

Van der Linden (NL, NMP) underlined the importance of an integrated foreign service. Avgerinos (Gr, NMP) and Meyer (D, NMP) expressed the hope that member states would move towards common EU embassies in third countries. Dehaene reiterated the proposal for a European diplomatic academy that, he clarified, would not replace but complement national institutions.

Defence, security and solidarity

Some representatives of neutral and non-aligned states (Finland: Kiljunen, Tiilikainen; Sweden: Hjelm-Wallén, Lekberg; but also Kaufmann (D, MEP)) expressed concerns about the Union turning too much into a military alliance. They looked particularly critical at the possibility that through some form of enhanced cooperation a subset of member states would be able to undertake military action under the EU-flag. At the same time though it was conceded that non-aligned states might be involved in defence operations in non-military ways. On the other hand there were conventioners (Borrell, van Eekelen, Muñoz Alonso) who insisted that defence policy is already an integral part of the EU.

The (terrorism) solidarity clause proposed by the Working Group on defence was carried by a strong consensus, especially as it was seen to link external with internal security. Some conventioners (Fini, Muñoz Alonso) regarded this clause as little more than a formal, rhetorical affirmation of the existing relationship among the Member States. Others saw several more purposes to which this proposal might be turned. Borrell (SP, NMP) advocated the development of a common policy with regard to environmental and natural disasters. De Villepin (F, gov) warned that political threats might not only come from abroad but might also emerge among fragile member states. Haenel (F, NMP) argued for the introduction of a common fund against terrorist threats. He added that a solidarity clause was not enough but also needed to be complemented by a genuine spirit of solidarity. Farnleitner (ÖS, gov) argued that solidarity would require the member states to genuinely live up to their obligations towards each other.

Contrary to the positive reception of the solidarity clause, a mutual defence clause met with strong resistance by a considerable number of conventioners (Hain, Korčok, Kohout). Dick Roche (IRL, gov; also NMP de Rossa) envisaged constitutional problems for his country to sign up to such a clause. Peter Hain expressed the view that a mutual defence clause is “Nato-business” (cf. de Vries). He was answered by Vitorino (Commission) who, while underlining the continuing importance Nato plays for European security, observed that, like the existing mutual defence clause of the WEU, an EU mutual defence clause need not undermine Nato. In Vitorino’s view a reinforced EU defence policy would be complementary to rather than competitive with Nato.

Brok (MEP, D) proposed to add the mutual defence clause of the WEU (art. 5) as a protocol to the EU Treaty allowing each state the choice to accede to it or not (seconded by Dastis, Berès, Farnleitner). Indeed as Barnier noted 10 of the 15 current member states are already bound by the WEU. Notably, the Irish NMP’s Bruton and De Rossa also conceded the acceptability of this proposal. Stuart (UK, NMP) emphasised that adopting art. 5 WEU would require art. 4 WEU to be included as

well. Santer (Lux, gov) suggested that the mutual defence clause from the Brussels Treaty might be even more appropriate for this aim than art. 5 WEU.

According to Katiforis the relationship between the EU's defence policy and the Nato was the key to the whole defence debate. Similarly, Abitbol (MEP, F) pointed out how much the whole European defence depended on the US. Several conventioners (especially from new member states: Fogler, Korčok, Figel; but also Lopes, Maij-Weggen, Stuart) underlined the importance of coordinating EU's defence policy with Nato. Spini (It, ANMP) suggested that the EU might just come to command a clearly distinguished European military line within the broader Nato-framework. Carnero (MEP, SP) raised the particular point of how the EU's rapid reaction force would be related to Nato. Abitbol argued for orienting the EU's defence strategy above all towards the UN. Responding to this debate, Barnier assured that the current commitments of EU member states under Nato would be left untouched. He recollected, however, also the earlier commitment expressed by the European Council to strengthen the European military capabilities and to allow for these capabilities to be employed in situations where the Nato is not involved (cf. Borrell).

Defence Capabilities

Most conventioners (e.g. Michel, Dastis, Figel) welcomed the proposed expansions of the Petersburg tasks. Vitorino (Commission) underlined the importance of integration between internal and external security policy. Bruton (Irl, NMP) queried, however, whether the proposed amendments about conflict prevention did justify pre-emptive military action. For one Sylvia Kaufmann (MEP, D) spoke against extending the Petersburg tasks. She argued against any military action of the EU outside of its own borders and instead advocated intensifying cooperation in the framework of the OVSE. Katiforis (Gr, gov) adopted a notable sceptical stance as he argued that the EU was merely preparing itself for the last war. Van Eekelen (NL, ANMP) advocated the establishment of a lump-sum financing mechanism for the ESDP, similar to that already in force for the CFSP.

A number of conventioners (Hain, Haenel, Korčok, de Villepin, Figel, Katiforis, Szent-Iványi, Stuart, Fischer) underlined the need to substantially increase European defence expenditure. Korhonen (Fi, ANMP) pointed at the importance of preserving the international competitiveness of the EU defence industry. De Vries (NL, gov) agreed on the need to strengthen military capabilities, but he also underlined that much might be attained by actively reducing waste and increasing efficiency (also Fischer). Van der Linden (NL, NMP) argued for, first of all, concretising and substantiating the financial commitments. Hjelm-Wallén (Sw, gov) insisted that the EU's capabilities should focus on the capacity goals following from the Petersburg tasks.

Others were openly reluctant to increase defence investment. Tiilikainen (Fi, gov) took a more restraint approach as she underlined the importance of optimising the use of present capabilities and armaments. Several conventioners (Timmermans, Fogler (ANMP, Pol), Brok) submitted that the EU would first need to reap the efficiency gains of coordinating procurement policies and joining industrial and research capacities before an increase in overall investment levels was warranted.

The proposal for the establishment of an European Armaments and Strategic Research Agency found wide support (Dini, Michel, Haenel, Santer, Szent-Iványi, Lennmarker). Timmermans (NL, NMP) noted that the objective of an internal market for defence could only be achieved if member states procurement policies would be freed from national market protections (cf. Szent-Iványi) while they would at the same time give general preference to European products. As Barnier stated in

conclusion, an EARA would not only increase the efficiency of the European defence market but also serve to boost effort in research and production.