

Wednesday, 13 April 2005 - Strasbourg

Foreign policy / Security

Gomes (PSE). - (PT) The European security strategy challenges us to consider the Union's role in world governance, and the reports by Mr Kuhne and Mr Brok make excellent contributions towards addressing this challenge. If they are to be effective and coherent, Europe's foreign security and defence policies must place the accent firmly on the citizens, promoting human rights, international and humanitarian law and multilateralism in international relations. In other words, they must be rooted in the concept of human security, as emphasised in the Kuhne report, in line with the Barcelona report on the Human Security Doctrine.

The importance of this area is all the greater given that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the fight against terrorism must continue to be at the forefront of Europe's priorities in terms of security. We must incorporate these concerns into every aspect of external relations, in particular the new neighbourhood policy, and in this context the Union must have a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, as has previously been said.

The EU must also strive to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and to tighten controls on exports of nuclear material and arms in general. The Union must also ensure that its action plan to combat terrorism works closely in tandem with its foreign and security and defence policies, as part of the integrated global strategy for fighting terrorism recently announced by Kofi Annan.

The development commitments made by the European governments in the Millennium Declaration must also be honoured. Poverty and injustice are fertile breeding grounds for terrorism. If we are to achieve a security and defence policy resulting in greater strategic independence for Europe, greater capacity and greater integration of defence resources, and a genuine internal market, the European Defence Agency must provide us, for our debates, with information on policies relating to the procurement, development and research of equipment. It is now up to the Member State governments to lay the groundwork for this new agency to work. The next financial perspectives must demonstrate that our governments are committed to the success of European security, which largely depends on the resources at its disposal in the Union.

I shall conclude by relating that last week in Sarajevo, along with Mr Von Wogau and other Members of this House, I witnessed the proud British General in charge of EUFOR actually handing out national honours. I could not help thinking that, had there been a foreign policy and a European security and defence policy in place 15 years ago, Europe might have prevented the war in the former Yugoslavia or might have stopped it at an earlier stage. The important work of the Althea mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina is proof that, with the appropriate resources, Europe can and must take on more responsibilities in European and worldwide security.