

Wednesday, 15 November 2006 - Strasbourg

The implementation of the European Security Strategy in the context of the ESDP (continuation of debate)

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - (PT) I wish to congratulate Mr von Wogau on his ambitious report. It is a report that recognises that, in spite of the progress that has been made in the area of Europe's security and defence, much remains to be done. I agree with what Mr von Wogau said in the Chamber today: the process of building a Union of security and defence has the potential to bring us closer again to the citizens of the Union.

The figures from Eurobarometer are clear: 77% of Europeans support a European security and defence policy. Even in the United Kingdom, the country of Mr van Orden and of some of the most vocal Eurosceptics in this Chamber, support stands at 59%.

Yet this report is limited in scope. Although it boldly proposes the creation of a European budget for the Union's military activities, advocates strengthening the role of the European Parliament and national parliaments in scrutinising Europe's security and defence policies and rightly calls for the advances proposed by the Constitutional Treaty not to be cast aside, this report limits itself to reiterating support for the initiatives put forward by the Council and the Commission in vital areas of industrial integration and the creation of a European defence equipment market.

It is disappointing that this report does not go further. I am firmly in favour of introducing the principle of European preference in the area of the procurement of defence equipment. What is at stake in the long term is the EU's strategic autonomy, and Parliament has thus far been unable to present its own vision in this area.

Madam President we must not let ourselves be blinded by the dogma of the market. It is crucial that, following the lead of our friends and partners around the world, we do not forget the strategic and political implications of this sector of industry.