

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr COPPIETERS, Mrs CASTELLINA,
Mrs MACCIOCCHI and Mr BLANEY

pursuant to Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure

on trade in arms, munitions and military
equipment

The European Parliament,

- recalling the Final Communiqué of the European Summit Conference at the Hague (1-2 December 1969) and, in particular, the fourth point thereof, to the effect that a Europe 'conscious of the role it has to play in promoting the relaxation of international tension and rapprochement among peoples is indispensable for world equilibrium and for peace',
- referring to the Paris Conference of 19-20 October 1972 at which the Heads of State or Government stated that: 'their efforts to construct their Community will only take on their full meaning to the extent that the Member States succeed in acting together to meet Europe's growing responsibilities in the world',
- having regard to the Joint Declaration adopted at Luxembourg on 5 April 1977 in which the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission stressed the vital importance they attached to respect for fundamental rights, particularly where these flowed from the basic laws of the Member States and the European Treaties, with the object of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- having regard to the fact that the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission expressly committed themselves in the joint declaration to respecting these rights in the exercise of their powers,
- pleased at the steadily increasing interest its members are showing for the respect of human rights throughout the world, as reflected in an increasing number of parliamentary initiatives and debates,
- pointing to the fact that sales of arms and military equipment are a major factor in the external economic relations of the Member States as is repeatedly shown in the strictly objective Sipri Yearbook of World Armaments and Disarmament published by the Sipri Institute in Sweden,
- noting that the question of effective control of sales of arms and military equipment has been discussed repeatedly in the General Assembly of the United Nations, notably at the 1965, 1970 and 1972 sessions,
- recalling the numerous statements on arms sales made by bodies representing public opinion such as the World Council of Churches, the Synod of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church (November 1971), the World Congress of Major Religions in Kyoto (October 1970), the Council of French Bishops and the Protestant Federation of France (April 1973), Amnesty International (1976), Pax-Christi-Vlaanderen (1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980) and many youth organizations in the various Member States of the Community,

- noting that, at meetings of UNCTAD, proposals have repeatedly been put forward for measures to counter the present trade in arms, which is seen as having a harmful influence from the point of view not only of world peace, but also of the social and economic progress of the less-developed countries of the Third World, which find it increasingly difficult to develop their economies if they use their meagre financial resources to acquire arms, which, moreover, in many cases are rapidly rendered obsolete by progress in military technology,
- pointing to the frequent initiatives in the various parliamentary assemblies of the Member States aimed at controlling and restricting trade in armaments, munitions and military equipment,
- noting the fact that the statutory provisions of the Member States governing trade and exports of armaments vary widely, as is shown by a comparison of: the Import, Export and Customs Powers (Defence) Act of 1939 and the implementing Export of Goods Control Order of 1970 issued by the President of the Board of Trade in the case of the United Kingdom; the decrees of 18 April 1939 and 16 July 1955 on the setting up of the interdepartmental committee on arms exports and the decree and implementing decision of 12 March 1973 in the case of France; the rules governing the export of strategically-important goods in accordance with the decision of 26 April 1963 adopted pursuant to the law of 5 July 1962 concerning imports and exports in the case of the Netherlands; the law on the control of armaments adopted on 20 April 1961 pursuant to Article 26 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany; the Belgian laws of 11 September 1962 and 19 July 1968,
- having taken note of the statement made on 12 March 1980 by the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Henri Simonet, to the Belgian lower house concerning orders for armaments placed in Belgium by the Government of Uruguay to the effect that the United Kingdom does not impose a systematic embargo on arms sales to Uruguay but decides each case on its own merits; the Federal Republic of Germany avoids large-scale deliveries but does permit limited exports of light weapons and France seems to impose no restrictions at all,
- dismayed at the fact that, while it was discussing in depth the brutal violation of human rights by the Uruguayan Government at its plenary sitting of 15 April last, various Member States of the Community, acting contrary to the letter and the spirit of the European Summit at the Hague, the Paris Conference and the Joint Luxembourg Declaration, were helping to consolidate the repressive policies in Uruguay by supplying arms,

- noting that this type of action is not an isolated incident but occurs almost all the time in all corners of the world with the result that the European Community is indirectly responsible for bloody conflicts of all kinds,

1. Urges the Commission and the Council to prepare and implement without delay a directive which would make sales of armaments and military equipment to non-member countries subject to strict rules on the issuing of verifiable export licences and impose an immediate embargo on all exports and sales to countries whose governments do not respect human rights;
2. Calls on the European Council to discuss the problem of the trade in armaments and military equipment in depth at its next meeting;
3. Instructs its Political Affairs Committee as the committee responsible and the Legal Affairs Committee, the Committee on External Economic Relations and the Committee on Development and Cooperation consulted for an opinion to investigate all steps which could be taken to ensure that the legal, political and moral values on which the European Community is founded form the basic principles for Community policy on the sale of weapons, munitions and military equipment to non-member countries;
4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and Council of the European Communities.

