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P5_TA(2003)0522

Defence equipment

European Parliament resolution on the communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – European Defence – Industrial and market issues – Towards an EU Defence Equipment Policy (COM(2003) 113 – 2003/2096(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the communication from the Commission (COM(2003) 113) and to its previous communications (COM(1996) 10) and (COM(1997) 583),
- having regard to its resolutions of 11 April 1984⁽¹⁾, 13 July 1990⁽²⁾, 17 September 1992⁽³⁾, 19 January 1995⁽⁴⁾, 15 May 1997⁽⁵⁾, 14 May 1998⁽⁶⁾, 30 November 2000⁽⁷⁾, 10 April 2002⁽⁸⁾, 15 May 2002⁽⁹⁾ and 10 April 2003⁽¹⁰⁾, on this subject,
- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of various European Councils on this matter and, in particular, those of the Cologne European Council (3/4 June 1999) and of the Helsinki European Council (10/11 December 1999) on strengthening the common European Security and Defence Policy, and to the Presidency's reports on developing the Union's military and non-military crisis management capability,
- having regard to the letter of intent on measures to facilitate the restructuring of the European defence industry signed in London on 6 July 1998 by the Defence Ministers of Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the UK and Sweden, which specifies the objectives and principles adopted by governments in order to promote the constitution and effective functioning of transnational defence companies in Europe,
- having regard to the joint statement by the Ministers of Defence of the aforementioned countries, made on 20 April 1998, in which they agreed to make it a priority to seek to harmonise the requirements of their armed forces so as to avoid a duplication of their acquisition, research and technological development policies,
- having regard to the agreement concluded by the EU Foreign Ministers at their informal meeting of 7 May 2000 in the Azores, in which they decided to back plans for joint EU-NATO working groups looking at security issues, military capabilities, arrangements for the EU to use NATO military assets, and the definition of more permanent consultation mechanisms between the EU and NATO,
- having regard to the military and police capability improvement conferences and the European Action Plan on this matter of 19 November 2001,
- having regard to the Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government of the Atlantic Alliance on 21 November 2002 at the Prague summit,
- having regard to the Ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council and the NATO-EU Ministerial meeting held in Madrid on 3 June 2003,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 127, 14.5.1984, p. 70.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 231, 17.9.1990, p. 209.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 284, 2.11.1992, p. 138.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 43, 20.2.1995, p. 89.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 167, 2.6.1997, p. 137.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 167, 1.6.1998, p. 190.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 228, 13.8.2001, p. 173.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ C 127 E, 29.5.2003, p. 582.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ C 180 E, 31.7.2003, p. 392.

⁽¹⁰⁾ P5_TA(2003)0188.

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- having regard to Article 17(1) of the EU Treaty, in particular the point concerning cooperation in the field of armaments, and to Article 296 of the Treaty on the protection of national security interests,
 - having regard to Rules 47(2) and 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the opinion of the – Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (A5-0342/2003),
 - having regard to the second report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy (A5-0370/2003),
- A. whereas the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has made it possible to launch and conduct EU-led operations to manage both non-military and military crises, irrespective of the specific objectives of the security and defence policy of the Member States,
- B. whereas the consistent failure of several European States to increase expenditure on defence or to improve their military capabilities and interoperability with the Allies may jeopardise the cohesion of NATO,
- C. whereas the defence budget of the EU Member States is approximately 50% of that of the US, but their military capability is a mere 10% of that of the US,
- D. whereas both societies are based on the same values of liberty, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, and therefore close cooperation is necessary between them,
- E. whereas the concept of a European Security and Defence Identity was accepted and recognised by all parties to the Atlantic Alliance at the Berlin meeting of June 1996,
- F. whereas the strategic partnership agreement concluded on 16 December 2002 and the implementation of permanent agreements concluded between, and implemented by, the EU and NATO, and in particular the 'Berlin Plus' agreements, have enabled the EU to use NATO's military operational planning capabilities and command structures to carry out EU-led operations, requiring more rigorous accounting in respect of defence equipment,
- G. whereas the end of the cold war has led to a reduction in orders for military equipment, and it is therefore necessary to strengthen this sector once more, not only in the interests of its economic and social revival but also and above all in order to ensure a safer world,
- H. whereas the ongoing restructuring of national defence-linked industries has given rise to various coordination initiatives, as evidenced by the aforementioned letter of intent and the associated framework agreement, and also the creation of the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation,
- I. whereas, following the events of 11 September 2001, security within the EU has become a more urgent issue, increasing the responsibility of those Member States charged with protecting the external borders of the Union,
- J. whereas parliamentary controls over the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and ESDP are divided between the European Parliament and the national parliaments, and the latter continue to have basic powers over military expenditure and operational matters involving the armed forces,
- K. having regard to the eastwards enlargement of NATO, parallel to that of the EU, and the consequent need for growing coordination between all Member States,
- L. whereas the European defence industry is economically and politically essential to the EU,

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- M. whereas an internal market for armament equipment does not exist, and separate national procurement procedures and different forms of export regulation obstruct its development,
- N. noting the potential benefits for SMEs and the call in the defence industries for a coordinated defence equipment policy,
1. Notes the communication from the Commission which follows a request made by the European Parliament and provides Member States with an appropriate framework for reflection on enhanced and effective cooperation in the arms sector;
 2. Insists on the need for the EU to endow itself with military capabilities, so as to ensure the credibility of its foreign and defence policy objectives; is aware that, if this project is to be successful, Member States must make a commitment to military expenditure over a period of time corresponding to their long-term defence obligations; awaits the drafting of the Commission Green Paper in 2004 setting out standards generally applicable to the purchase of defence equipment;
 3. Expresses its conviction that NATO remains not only a fundamental guarantee for the stability and security of the Euro-Atlantic area, but also an essential framework for developing joint operations; considers that it is therefore in the common interest to increase the interoperability of intra-European and transatlantic defence equipment;
 4. Recognises, within this framework, the need for favourable conditions to be established for the development of a European defence equipment industry which is competitive and viable; vigorously supports the Commission's project to map the situation of the defence industry in the EU through data collection; calls for the development of a research and development programme designed to improve the Union's capabilities in the area of defence; stresses also the need for Community-level support for pilot and demonstration projects to develop European capabilities in advanced technological sectors;
 5. Insists that in developing a European defence contribution, no shadow budgets should be created and urges that parliamentary control be assured; recalls that, at the current stage, this control has, for the most part, to be exercised by national parliaments;
 6. Encourages Member States to restructure the defence equipment industries sector and subscribe to the principle of industrial and technological interdependence in this sector, so as to ensure that public defence spending is used more effectively and overlapping is avoided;
 7. Attaches great importance, therefore, to intra-European cooperation, to competitiveness and to the principle of Community preference, without excluding cooperation with third countries or the acquisition by Member States of defence equipment outside Europe, where supply proposals are more economically attractive than those available within the European Union and where these purchases operate in a form that is complementary to the realisation of a European project;
 8. Calls for the expectations of the candidate countries in terms of security and national stability to be duly taken into account, since these countries have to be involved in the process of restructuring defence-linked industries;
 9. Considers that the increased opening-up of the arms markets must seek to ensure security of supply at national and European level; advocates, to this end, a reduction in controls on intra-Community transfers of defence equipment, the simplification of administrative procedures, and the approximation of national licence systems; recognises, however, the complexity and political sensitivity of this sector;
 10. Reiterates its position calling for the progressive establishment of a European armaments market and, in order to do this, calls for the drawing-up and implementation of common rules; asks the Commission to propose transparent procedures and simplification measures;

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11. Stresses that standards bodies in the European Union should make a major contribution to interoperability of armaments, in particular as regards products which may be used in both the civilian and military area;
12. Reiterates that the internal opening-up of military markets should be accompanied by a further strengthening of export controls at the external borders of the EU; underlines, in this perspective, that the EU and its Member States should fully implement all of Parliament's recommendations on the implementation of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports;
13. Proposes that, as part of the negotiations for the forthcoming financial perspective, Community support programmes be set up to review defence equipment; proposes, in particular, that a programme be set up devoted exclusively to the development of equipment for the protection of the EU's external frontiers, with the objective of meeting the requirements of the fight against international terrorism and organised crime, illegal immigration, trafficking in arms, narcotics and human beings, and maritime crime;
14. Recalls the decision by the Thessaloniki European Council to create, in the course of 2004, an intergovernmental agency in the field of defence capabilities development, research, acquisition and armaments, subject to the authority of the Council and open to participation by all Member States; stresses, however, that the activities of this agency must be precisely defined in advance, so as to endow it with added value; requests that it be consulted when the activities and working methods of the Agency will be defined;
15. Is of the opinion that the Agency should deal, firstly, with the equipment and armament of the European crisis intervention force, especially in relation to its compatibility; the Agency should also develop a long-term approach towards capability needs; the Agency should analyse at what moment in time and in which area a new need will arise, and which technological possibilities will exist at that moment to meet the respective shortfall; the Agency should have its own budget which should concentrate on the research and development of new technologies;
16. Expects full codecision procedures to be followed when decisions are to be made in the field of industrial policy;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

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Stabilisation and association process for South-East Europe

European Parliament resolution on the Stabilisation and Association Process for South-East Europe: Second Annual Report (COM(2003) 139 – 2003/2094(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the European Commission's Second Annual Report on the Stabilisation and Association Process for South-East Europe (COM(2003) 139),
- having regard to the Conclusions of the Fourth Parliamentary Conference EU-Stability Pact Countries of 21 May 2003,
- having regard to its Resolution of 5 June 2003⁽¹⁾ on the meeting of the Troika with the countries participating in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, and of its resolution of 3 July 2003⁽²⁾ on the European Council of 19/20 June 2003 in Thessaloniki,

⁽¹⁾ P5_TA(2003)0264.

⁽²⁾ P5_TA(2003)0320.