Resolution on an arms trade treaty: establishment of common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons

2007/2582(RSP) - 21/06/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted the resolution on an arms trade treaty (ATT) regarding the establishment of common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons. It welcomed the adoption of Resolution A/RES/61/89 by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in December 2006, marking the formal start of a process towards an ATT. All States were urged to emphasise in their submissions that the ATT should codify existing obligations under international law with respect to arms transfers, and especially those covering human rights and humanitarian law. In order for the ATT to be effective, Parliament recommended that all States base their submissions on the following parameters:

- States are responsible for and must regulate all arms transfers that fall within their jurisdiction;

- States must assess all international arms transfers in the light of the following three categories of restriction under existing law: (i) express prohibitions, whereby States must not transfer arms in certain situations based on existing prohibitions on the manufacture, possession, use and transfer of arms; (ii) prohibitions based upon the likely use of the weapons, in particular where the arms are likely to be used to commit serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law; (iii) criteria and emerging norms that must be considered when assessing arms transfers, including the question whether the arms will be used for terrorist attacks or violent and/or organised crime, adversely affect sustainable development or regional security or stability, or involve corrupt practices;

-States must agree a monitoring and enforcement mechanism providing for prompt, impartial and transparent investigation of alleged violations of an ATT and appropriate penalties for offenders.

Pending the adoption of an ATT, all States are asked to take efficient measures to stop the irresponsible brokering and transportation of arms, ammunition and associated military and security equipment of all types, including components and dual-use items, as well as the transfer and licensing of foreign production of such equipment to parties who are subject to international arms embargoes or who persistently commit serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law.

Parliament categorically denounced trade in arms and ammunition in violation of UN Security Council arms embargoes. It called upon EU Member States to enhance their cooperation with other States in this area. The competent international organisations and the appropriate regional organisations must recommend, in coordination with the air transport industry, appropriate preventive measures.