# Resolution on the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports

2008/2682(RSP) - 04/12/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 3 December 2008, the European Parliament adopted by 562 votes to 37 with 20 abstentions a resolution on the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, the 10th anniversary of which was in June.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the following political groups: EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, Greens/ALE, UEN, GUE/NGL.

Parliament recalls that, on 30 June 2005, COARM (the Council Working Party on Conventional Arms) agreed at technical level on the text of a common position as the result of a thorough process of revision of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, with the aim of transforming the Code into an efficient instrument to control arms exports from EU territory and by EU companies. The adoption of that common position will make the Code a legally binding arms export control instrument for all EU Member States, but despite calls from Parliament to do so, the Council has since 2005 failed to adopt that common position at political level, leaving the issue unresolved. This issue has acquired a new sense of urgency owing to a number of developments. These include renewed interest in controlling the impact of the illicit arms trade, in particular since the entry into force of EU air safety regulations and the impact these have had on the activities of air cargo operators that are suspected of being involved in destabilising arms transfers.

Parliament reiterates forcefully, in the light of the tenth anniversary of the Code, its criticism of the current political impasse caused by the non-adoption of the common position. It urges the French Presidency, and, if need be, the forthcoming Presidencies, to resolve the issue by ensuring that the common position is adopted without further delay. The EU's contribution to an internationally binding Arms Trade Treaty will gain strong credibility as soon as its own arms exports regime becomes legally binding.

In parallel with the adoption of the common position, the following measures, inter alia, should be taken:

- preventing irresponsible arms transfers by a strict application of the Code's criteria to both companies and national armed forces ;

- preventing illegal arms trafficking by air and sea;

- improving and applying brokering controls by calling on all Member States that have not yet done so to incorporate into their national legislation the letter and spirit of Council Common Position 2003/468 /CFSP on the control of arms brokering ;

- prompt investigation of recent allegations of violations of arms embargoes;

- preventing the selling-off to private brokers of arms collected in the course of ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) and SSR (Security Sector Reform) operations and other EU initiatives, and their subsequent transfer to other regions of violent conflict or tension;

- improving the transparency and quality of data submitted by EU Member States in the context of the Annual Report on the Code of Conduct.

Parliament states that it is convinced that the adoption of the common position on the Code of Conduct on Arms Exports is vital for the orderly implementation of the impending directive on intra-Community transfers of defence-related goods and for an efficient control of arms exports.