Recommendation to the High Representative and to the Council under Rule 118 in preparation of the 2020 Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) review process, nuclear arms control and nuclear disarmament options

2020/2004(INI) - 21/10/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 641 votes to 5, with 47 abstentions, a recommendation to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning the preparation of the 2020 Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) review process, nuclear arms control and nuclear disarmament options.

Members recalled that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons has undoubtedly been the most important international instrument for regulating the nuclear regime for the last 50 years. It prompted the abandonment of nuclear weapons by a number of countries, in Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. It enabled the peaceful development of nuclear energy and led to drastic reductions in nuclear weapons arsenals over the time since the Cold War.

The 2020 Review Conference will take place in a particularly challenging international security context, owing to the lack of progress in the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, the withdrawal of the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, the collapse of the INF Treaty, and the stalemate in negotiations for the extension of the new START Treaty between Russia and the US.

Members stressed that there is a significant risk that major military powers will no longer tend to resort to arms control and disarmament to ease international tensions and improve the global security environment, ultimately once again assigning nuclear weapons pride of place on strategic balance sheets and thus leading to an increase in nuclear risks worldwide.

With a view to ensuring the success of the 2020 review process, Parliament made the following key recommendations to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy:

The NPT, cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime

Parliament recommended:

- reiterating that effective multilateralism and a rules-based international order are a precondition for countering the proliferation of nuclear weapons and that the NPT is an irreplaceable bulwark against the risk of nuclear proliferation and an indispensable framework for preserving and consolidating peace and security in the world;

- reaffirming the full support of the EU and its Member States for the NPT and its three mutually reinforcing pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Progress in arms control and nuclear disarmament

Parliament stressed that effective verification of nuclear disarmament was essential to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. It recommended:

- urging the states parties to do their utmost to achieve further progress in arms control and nuclear disarmament processes, in particular through an overall reduction in the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, and to ensure that the trend of nuclear arsenal reduction since the peak of nuclear weapons in 1986 is not reversed;

- urging the US and Russia to enhance mutual trust and confidence with a view to resuming a dialogue on possible ways to build a new arms control relationship and encouraged both parties to negotiate a new instrument that would encompass both deployed and non-deployed, as well as strategic and non-strategic weapons, and would include China.

Parliament expressed alarm at the demise of the INF Treaty, also in view of the fact that medium-range missiles are particularly liable to increase the risks of nuclear escalation on the European continent.

It recommended:

- encouraging dialogue on the possibility of a multilateral treaty on ballistic missiles;

- limiting the transfer of proliferation-relevant nuclear technology to those states parties to the NPT which have concluded and are implementing International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards;

- continuing to work towards the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East;

- confirming the right of the parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes to meet their long-term energy needs.