Challenges and prospects for multilateral Weapons of Mass Destruction arms control and disarmament regimes

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The European Parliament adopted by 536 votes to 128, with 31 abstentions, a resolution on the challenges and prospects for multilateral weapons of mass destruction arms control and disarmament regimes.

Progress towards disarmament and non-proliferation

Members reiterated their commitment to the **preservation of effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes** as a cornerstone of global and European security. They confirmed their commitment to pursuing policies designed to move the reduction and elimination of all nuclear arsenals forward and to create conditions to achieve a world free of **nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological weapons**. They called for a renewed arms control and disarmament multilateral order that involves all players.

Parliament is also concerned about the ongoing erosion of the global non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control architecture, which is worsened by the rapid development of new and potentially destabilising systems, such as **artificial intelligence weapons systems** and hypersonic missile and drone technologies.

Arms control treaties

Members are concerned that the withdrawal or non-renewal of key arms control treaties could seriously undermine international arms control regimes and relations between nuclear weapon states. They called on all nuclear-weapon States to reduce the role and importance of nuclear weapons in their military doctrines.

Recalling its full support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to which 191 States are party, Parliament stressed the need to ensure its effectiveness and called on all States to sign, accede to and commit themselves to the NPT. It called on the Council to advocate that the European Union speak with one voice in international disarmament and non-proliferation fora and to promote confidence-building measures between all NPT parties. Disarmament issues should be placed high on the agenda of the political dialogue with third countries.

The resolution stressed the need to build on the work undertaken in the framework of the '**Strategic Compass**' to integrate WMD proliferation issues into the common understanding of threats and to achieve a common strategic culture on WMD.

Members welcomed the EU's commitment to helping create a **zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East**. They reaffirmed their desire to work towards the complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, urging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to immediately cease its nuclear and missile activities and other WMD-related programmes.

Parliament reaffirmed its full support for the 2015 **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action** (JCPOA – Iranian nuclear agreement) as a key element of the European Union's strategy to combat terrorism. Stressing the essential role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in monitoring and verifying Iran's compliance with the safeguard agreement, Members recalled that the Agency's verification

activities are essential to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, calling on states that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the IAEA Additional Protocol without delay.

USA, Russia, China

Members regretted the withdrawal of the United States and Russia from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) following Russia's persistent non-compliance with the treaty. They are particularly concerned about the possible re-emergence of ground-based intermediate-range missiles in the European theatre of operations, as well as a **new arms race** and remilitarisation in Europe. They urged both countries to establish an ambitious basis for resuming negotiations on a new arms control architecture. Members welcomed the decision by the US and Russia to extend the New START Treaty as an important contribution to the 10th NPT Review Conference.

Parliament noted with concern the ongoing modernisation and expansion of China's nuclear arsenal, including nuclear-capable hypersonic missiles. China is urged to engage actively and in good faith in international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation negotiations.

Chemical weapons

Parliament welcomed the EU's contribution to mitigating the risks of **chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks** around the world through its assistance to partner countries. It reaffirmed its full support for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) which prohibits the use of dangerous viruses, bacteria and toxic substances against humans.

Concerned about the threat of chemical warfare and the increased ability of some state and non-state actors to produce banned chemical agents more quickly, Members stressed the need to uphold the global ethical norm against chemical weapons by combating impunity for their use. The global human rights sanctions regime recently adopted by the EU should be used effectively to meet this standard.

Members reiterated their deep concern about the attempted assassinations of Alexei Navalny and Sergei and Yulia Skripal, using the banned nerve agent Novichok, which is considered a chemical weapon under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). They strongly condemned the development and widespread use of chemical weapons by States that are members of the CWC, and condemned the numerous human rights violations and atrocities committed by the regime of the Syrian Arab Republic under Bashar Al-Assad.

Lastly, Parliament stressed the need to take additional measures to combat the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in order to impede the transfer of technology and knowledge to hostile non-state actors.