Treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. New York Conference 1995

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The position adopted by the committee on the eve of the opening of the New York conference on extending the NPT (17 April to 12 May 1995) is that the European Union should set an example by lobbying for a total nuclear test ban. This approach is set out in the report by Mr Jan Marinus WIERSMA (PSE, NL) which was adopted by a large majority of members (with the Greens and GUE/NGL abstaining). The committee arrived at this point by adopting an amendment proposed by the Greens, calling for joint action along these lines and, in the meantime, for the Member States of the European Union to expressly renounce all nuclear tests. The European Union was also called on to take an initiative at the UNO conference on disarmament which would lead to global nuclear disarmament. The report in fact starts from the premise that the NPT has not prevented the knowledge and skills needed to manufacture nuclear weapons from spreading. In addition, this treaty does not offer countries with no nuclear capability sufficient guarantees, which is why it considers that the European Union should set an example and ensure that the conference avoids a temporary solution at all costs. The members support the joint action by the Fifteen to obtain an unconditional and indefinite extension of the NPT. In order to be effective, any action must be backed up by sanctions, hence the call for sanctions in order to crack down on any violation of the provisions of the treaty (example of Iraq and North Korea). For the same reason, the international Community should introduce instruments which allow it to prosecute cases of illegal nuclear proliferation, including illegal trafficking in radioactive substances and fissile materials. However, countries with no nuclear capability which can be used for military purposes will have to be offered guarantees if they are to accede. In order to achieve this, the WIERSMA report backs the call from such countries for more solid guarantees under a treaty protecting them from any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Countries with nuclear weapons must therefore undertake not to use them first against countries with no nuclear weapons. In addition, Mr WIERSMA recommends effectively strengthening the controls by ensuring that countries with nuclear weapons allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to check their entire nuclear capability. Controls could also be made more efficient by creating a UNO register of nuclear arms. This report is due to be debated during the April session.