Anti-personnel mines

1995/2076(INI) - 23/05/1995

Adopting the report by Mr Jan Willems Bertens, the Committee on Foreign Affairs voted in favour of a total ban on anti-personnel mines and their components which included the production, stockpiling, transfer, sale, exportation and use of such weapons. The report stressed that 5 to 10 million mines were produced annually throughout the world, killing or maiming 26,000 people a year, mainly civilians. The Committee on Foreign Affairs welcomed the adoption by the Council of a joint action on anti-personnel mines but felt that the provisions lacked teeth and would not be conducive to any real progress towards banning anti-personnel mines. Consequently, it called on the Council to amend and extend the scope of its joint action (or to adopt additional joint actions) in order to: - tighten the provisions relating to anti-personnel mines; - strengthen regulations on anti-vehicle mines; - address the problem of blinding laser weapons; - strengthen the United Nations convention on the use of certain conventional weapons as a whole (this convention had proven to be impractical as regards the problem of land mines and is due to be revised in the autumn of 1995). According to the report, the European Union has an important role to play in the run up to the forthcoming revision of the United Nations Convention on three counts. It needs to: - introduce a ban on the production of anti-personnel mines throughout the Union; - present a common position to the conference with a view to obtaining maximum restrictions on the use of land mines; - use its relations with third countries (especially African and Asian countries) to exert pressure on them to join the revised convention.