Arms: code of conduct on exports. 1st annual report

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The committee adopted a report by Gary TITLEY (PES, UK) on the implementation of the EU code of conduct on arms exports. The committee called for the establishment of a European Armaments Agency, said that responsible arms trade practices formed part of the "acquis communautaire" and called for the applicant countries to be actively involved in the further development of the code of conduct, which it believed should be made legally binding. The Commission and Council were asked to cooperate with the USA in devising a common approach to conventional arms export controls similar to that established for chemical weapons control. The committee believed that greater efforts were needed to establish common rules and effective EU controls to combat illegal arms trafficking and to control the legal trade in small arms and light weapons. In this connection all EU Member States were asked to sign the "letter of intent" (containing common rules on arms policy) which was due to be signed in July by six Member States. The report also called for the development of "end-use agreements" which would have the status of legally binding contracts. These should include a clause which would result in the breaking of the contract if the goods were found to be used for proscribed purposes. Following such a breach the customer would no longer be entitled to further deliveries of goods or related services. There should be a common requirement for the national authorities in the recipient country to obtain the approval of the original exporting country before re-export or change of end-use could take place. Lastly, the committee called upon Member States to consider how best to prevent the licensed production of military equipment where there was a risk that the equipment would be transferred to dubious or proscribed end-users.