Arms: code of conduct on exports, provision 8. 4th annual report

2003/2010(INI) - 17/06/2003

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Karl von WOGAU (EPP-ED, D) on the Council's 4th annual report on the implementation of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. It began by stressing the need for a clear and efficient common arms export policy, which would represent an important contribution to the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as well as to a strengthened common foreign policy approach by the Member States. As regards the implementation of the code, and in particular the compilation of data on export licences, the committee welcomed the greater harmonisation of statistical data but wanted to see more detailed information on, for example, the type and quantity of arms supplied, the number of licences refused and the reasons for refusal, the country of destination, the classification of end-users, etc. It also reiterated its previously-expressed view that a register and authorisation system should be introduced for the brokering of arms transactions, which should also apply to EU citizens and companies outside EU territory. In addition, MEPs called for a verification and post-export monitoring system to be set up, with provision for penalties, and urged the Member States to consider establishing a European arms export control agency. The report pointed out that organised criminals and international arms smugglers had expanded their activities in the area of small arms and were trafficking weapons along routes which went through the territory of the enlarged EU and also through its new neighbouring countries and countries in the Western Balkan region. It called on the future new Member States to tighten up their national legislation and their arms export practices on the basis of the Code and to compile and publish national annual reports, and suggested that the new neighbours of the enlarged EU and countries with which the EU had concluded, or intended to conclude, stabilisation and association agreements should also be asked to observe the EU Code of Conduct. MEPs welcomed the French initiative on establishing an 'International Code on Transparency and Responsibilities for Arms Transfers' based on the model of the EU code, and regretted the lack of US and Russian support for this proposal. Such an international initiative was urgently needed, they said, not least in the light of the latest findings concerning the arming of Iraq. They also supported the Commission's idea of legislation imposing a Community export ban on all equipment for torture and laying down strict controls for equipment that might be used for internal repression. The report added that particular attention should be paid to products which may be used for both civilian and military purposes and similarly to spare parts and products suitable for use in cyber warfare. Lastly, the committee felt that arms exports to countries involved in armed conflicts should be banned in principle.