# Defence-related industries: implementation of Union's strategy

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The report by Gary Titley (UK, PSE) on the Communication from the Commission on implementing European Union strategy on defence-related industries was adopted by the Parliament. The report welcomes the Commission's proposed action plan as a coherent set of measures aimed at extending the single market to defence equipment and calls on the Commission to adhere rigorously to the plan's timetable for major actions. The Parliament considers that the introduction of a defence technological and industrial base depends on close cooperation between the EU and the WEU and hopes for better coordination among arms cooperation initiatives launched by the states of Europe. It hopes to see OCCAR merged with the WEAO to form the European Armaments Agency referred to in the Treaty on European Union and in this respect, welcomes the WEAG's Master Plan. The report notes the need for closer cooperation between Member States in the aerospace sector (which is promising) and the sphere of land and naval equipment (which is still in need of restructuring). With regard to the latter sphere, the Parliament regrets the conclusion of the KONVER programme in 1999 and would like to see it extended, particularly in view of enlargement. To reinforce competition policy, it calls for progress on the European Company Statute. The report welcomes the code of conduct on arms exports, but only views it as an initial step towards the adoption of legally binding rules at a European level. With a view to the gradual introduction of a unified Community arms market, the report proposes the drafting of an internal code of conduct limiting the opportunities for invoking Article 223 of the EC Treaty. It calls upon all EU Member States to ratify and implement the Ottawa Treaty on Anti-Personnel Landmines as soon as possible. The Parliament welcomes the joint action of the Council of 17th December 1998 on small arms and views its implementation as a matter of priority. It takes the view that the harmonisation of the presidencies of the EU and the WEU as of 1st January 1999 must provide an opportunity for bringing together the Foreign and Defence Ministers of the Union's Member States, as well as the associated members and associated partners of the WEU, to debate conditions for a common arms policy. The Parliament considers the inclusion of the CEECs in the move to restructure defence-related industries to be essential. It is anxious that the CEECs should, as a minimum standard, adopt and implement strict controls on their arms exports. The report maintains that the development of a European technological and industrial defence base is not incompatible with the establishment of cooperation links with countries such as the United States, Russia and Ukraine and would in fact enhance opportunities to cooperate with such countries with a viw to protecting against threats linked to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The report finally proposes a number of amendments to the Commission's draft common position. These relate, in particular, to ensuring there are no distortions of competition on the single market, promotion of a European arms policy and the development of a common defence policy, a common CFSP and a European security and defence identity andthe continuation of efforts to set up a European Armaments Agency.