The environment, security and Foreign Affairs

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The Parliament adopted the resolution by Maj Britt Theorin (S, PES) on the environment, security and foreign policy. The report calls on the Commission to present a common stratgy, as foreseen by the Amsterdam Treaty, which brings together the CFSP aspects of EU policy with its trade, aid, development and international environmental policies between 2000 and 2010 so as to tackle the following individual issues and the relationships between them: - agricultural and food production and environmental degradation; - water shortages and transfrontier water supply; - deforestation and restoring carbon sinks; - unemployment, underemployment and absolute poverty; - sustainable development and climate change; deforestation, desertification and population growth; - the link between all of the above and global warming and the humanitarian and environmantal impact of increasingly extreme weather events. The Parliament calls on Member States to build environmental and health objectives into their defence and security policies. It recognises the important part played by the armed forces in a democratic society in making a substantial contribution to environmental damage via peace-keeping and peace-making initiatives. The report points out the environmental damage caused by nuclear tests and calls, in particular, on the Commission and the Council to take action to: - combat radiation pollution caused by uncontrolled, unsafe and unprofessional nuclear storage and dumping; - find an appropriate solution to deal with chemical and conventional weapons dumped after both World Wars; - deal with the environmental damage to land in Africa caused by war. It also calls on the military to end environmentally damaging activities and clean up polluted areas and urges Member States to take measures to support this, in particular by applying civil environmental legislation to all military activities. The Parliament recommends a number of ways in which the Member States should take action to use military-related resources for environmental protection and urges the Commission to help with the necessary exchange of information to achieve this. Given the drastic fall in military expenditure, it calls for increased efforts to convert military production facilities, both at national and community level - notably through KONVER. The Parliament stresses the importance of increasing work to prevent environmental and natural disasters. With regard to landmines, it calls on the Council to do more to ensure signature of the 1997 Ottawa Treaty by the USA, Russia, India and China and the EU to do more to help landmine victims and clearance. The report looks to the Member States to take measures and promote increased international cooperation to achieve environmentally-sound methods of weapon destruction, monitoring of nuclear arms waste and decontamination following military activity. Negotiations to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons should be based on mutual and balanced reduction commitments. The Parliament considers such negotiations to be a more urgent priority given the threat tothe global environment posed by the degradation of the condition of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union and considers that Europe (and particularly France and the U.K.) should take the lead in advancing this agenda, within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Conference on Disarmament. It wishes to ensure that all military activities are covered and regulated by international conventions and is particularly concerned about the environmental implications of HAARP (High Frequency Active Auroral Research Project). Finally, the report also wishes to see the EU work towards international conventions in the following areas: - banning weapons which might enable manipulation of human beings; - protection of the environment from unnecessary destruction in the event of war; - standards for the environmental impact of peacetime military activities.