Challenges facing the European defence-related industries: a contribution for action at European level

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In adopting the report by Mr Gary TITLEY (PSE, UK), Parliament wishes to consolidate the 'European defence identity' by calling on the Member States to define, in connection with the CFSP, a common armaments policy which could be developed. Parliament points out that the cooperation in the field of armaments which has been undertaken to date, either in a bilateral or in a multi-national framework, or within the WEU or NATO, has proved ineffective and it therefore proposes that the General Staffs of the WEU Member States should endeavour to decide what common equipment is needed to enable the objectives of the CFSP to be attained. With this in mind it supports the idea of setting up a Western European Armaments Organization (WEAO) and extending the Franco-German initiative to other countries. These are all initiatives which will eventually require Article 223 of the EC Treaty to be revised in order to achieve integrated production, trading and monitoring of armaments. Parliament therefore urges the Member States to take advantage of the Intergovernmental Conference as an opportunity for considering the possibility of adapting Article 223 in order to encourage the creation of a European armaments industry. However, matters must be taken further than that and the Parliament calls on the Commission to draw up a White Paper on the arms trade. For its part the Council is called upon to initiate a joint action on arms transfers which should lead to the drafting of a legally binding code of conduct. Parliament considers that the future armaments control policy should include a ban on exports to third countries which are suspected of being in the process of launching an armed attack or whose governments cannot claim even a modicum of democratic legitimacy. Similarly, countries which have not signed the UN armaments register or the regional and international armaments agreements should be boycotted. Lastly, as regards research, Parliament takes the view that there should be better coordination between the various programmes and emphasises the need to support pilot projects and demonstration projects at Community level in advanced technology sectors. It recommends that initiatives concerning disarmament should be included in the Fifth Framework Programme and stresses the issues of mines, biological and chemical weapons and the use of uranium and plutonium in weapons systems.