Arms: code of conduct on exports. 5th annual report

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Raül ROMEVA i RUEDA (Greens/EFA, ES) on the 5th annual report published by the Council under the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. MEPs said that a clear and efficient common arms export control was decisive in the fight against terrorism, the interest of conflict prevention and respect for human rights. They welcomed the improvements in the information provided by both old and new Member States with regard to their respective arms exports and emphasised the need to collect compatible data in order to ensure transparency. The report called for each Member State to provide data on the "type and quantity of arms supplied and on the total value of exports and the number of licences refused" in order to acquire fuller and more harmonised data. MEPs stressed the usefulness of a central database of denial notifications, since this would give Member States a source of information to investigate specific denials.

The report noted that the wording of the Code of Conduct was leading to diverging interpretations by different Member States and therefore welcomed the Users' Guide clarifying the Code. MEPS also praised in particular the efforts of Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK to control the brokering of conventional arms and they called on the other Member States to speed up the implementation of brokering controls. The committee reiterated its view that a compulsory register and authorisation system should be introduced for the brokering of arms transactions. It also urged Member States to prohibit the brokering of equipment for capital punishment, torture and other cruel treatment, and to criminalize violations whenever committed.

The Council and Member States were urged to maintain the EU embargo on trade in arms with China and not to weaken the existing national limitations on such arms sales. MEPs also called on Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey to "tighten their national legislation and above all their practices in the area of arms exports". They further stressed that "particular attention should be paid to Kaliningrad" which had in the past served as a transit point for shipments of military equipment and arms from other parts of Russia for illicit end-users. Member States should also agree on a list of countries involved in armed conflicts to which arms exports should be banned in principle. Finally, the report called for the introduction in the EU of a special tax on the arms trade, with the revenue from these taxes being paid into funds for victims of armed conflicts in particular and poverty alleviation more generally.