Non-proliferation of arms of mass destruction: a role for the European Parliament

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Girts Valdis **KRISTOVSKIS** (UEN, LV), and issued an urgent call for effective measures to combat the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Parliament stated that we are now entering a new and dangerous period that raises the possibility of a WMD arms race, especially in the Middle East**,** North-East Asia and South Asia. On the risks of proliferation, Parliament rejected the development of new-generation nuclear weapons (so-called mini-nukes or bunker-busting bombs) and changes in nuclear doctrines and called on the US administration to permanently stop such developments. It welcomed the willingness of the US Senate and Congress not to make available any further funding for the development of mini-nukes. It strongly believed that nuclear disarmament activity will contribute significantly to international security and reduce the risk of thefts of plutonium by terrorists.

European Union WMD policy: Parliament stressedthat the priorities for the EUshould be:

-continuation of political commitment at the international level to promote implementation of the EU WMD Strategy;

-greater emphasis on disarmament initiatives as well as non-proliferation issues;

-strengthening of the multilateral treaties making up the non-proliferation regimes;

-emphasis on non-proliferation and risks associated with the use of WMD by terrorists;

-provision of the financial resources needed to implement the EU WMD Strategy.

EU practice of establishing clauses on non-proliferation of WMD: Parliament welcomed the inclusion of clauses concerning non-proliferation of WMD in the latest European Union agreements with third countries and action plans, but pointed out that such measures must be strictly implemented by all the Union's partners without exception. All states which have a cooperation agreement with the EU, and nuclear-weapons states in particular, are called upon not to provide other states, especially states that are not parties to the NPT, with any assistance or encouragement in the acquisition of nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices which they may seek. Parliament recommended to this end that a toolbox of elements be prepared in close collaboration by the Council, the Commission and the Parliament to support any third country that requests assistance in this area. It went on to recall current treatries banning the military exploitation of outer space and called upon the EU and the Member States to explore the possibility of negotiating additional outer space agreements, in order to ensure the peaceful exploration and use of space and to prevent any arms race in outer space.

Strengthening effective multilateralism: Parliamentnoted that, as stated by Dr Hans Blix, the credible threat of the use of force has played an important role in facilitating the disarmament work of UNSCOM and UNMOVIC. It is essential that no military strategy becomes detached from the disarmament strategy in any given crisis, in order to avoid any premature expulsion of international verification teams, which remain one of the most important verification instruments. Parliament underlined that nuclear weapons are for deterrence purposes and reiterated that there would be no winners in a nuclear war.

Traditional and emerging nuclear powers: Parliament called on the nuclear-weapons States under the NPT - with particular emphasis on NATO members UK, France and USA - to make significant steps towards the elimination of their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their undertakings, thereby strengthening their moral authority and credibility. It called again on Israel, India and Pakistan to become States Parties to the NPT. It emphasised the need for stronger regional and multilateral security arrangements in the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and North-East Asia in order to reduce the pressure towards nuclear proliferation and to achieve the abandonment of related programmes. Furthermore, the EU must work with its international partners to develop and promote a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. In addition, Parliament:

-recommended that the EU attach the utmost importance to effective implementation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime in the Mediterranean, since security in Europe is inherently linked to security in that region;

-called on Iran to take all necessary steps to restore the international community's confidence and trusted that Iran can responsibly and transparently develop a civilian nuclear energy programme, inter alia, by meeting in full its commitments, notwithstanding its rights, under the NPT, fully cooperating with the IAEA, and re-establishing suspension of all aspects of its uranium enrichment-related activities, including tests and production at the uranium conversion facility at Isfahan;

-expressed extremely deep concern that on 10 February 2005 North Korea declared its possession of nuclear weapons and urged North Korea to rejoin the NPT, to revoke its decision to withdraw from the six-party talks and to allow the resumption of negotiations. Parliament similarly urged both North Korea and the United States to seek a speedy resolution of the current crisis, the first step being a United States offer to recommence heavy fuel oil supplies in exchange for the verified freezing of the Yongbyon plant.

Results and development of 2005 NPT Review Conference: Parliament expressed disappointment over both the outcome of, and the role played by the Member States at, the 2005 NPT Review Conference. The Member States, the Council and the Commission were asked to pursue in good faith the 41 measures contained in the Common Position, and in this connection, Parliament called on the United States to abandon its negative attitude to the NPT. France and the United Kingdom in particular must reinvigorate their pursuit of the 13 disarmament steps and engage with the United States, Russia and China, who also committed themselves to the process at the end of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Parliament went on to underline that under no circumstances should any state start or resume explosive nuclear testing. Everything possible must be done by the EU and by NATO to persuade the US administration to give up its resistance on this issue.

A role for the European Parliament: Parliament recalled the positive contribution that can be made by the European Parliament in addressing common security concerns on non-proliferation and disarmament in its capacity as a budgetary authority. In the framework of the discussions on the Financial Perspectives 2007-2013, it proposed a review of the existing Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999 and the establishment of a specific budget line within the Union's budget to finance all activities regarding WMD issues, irrespective of whether they fall within the Community or CFSP framework, whilst respecting their respective decision-making processes as well as the competences of the Council, the Commission and the Personal Representative.