

Reply from the WEU Council to Recommendation 297 on a European armaments policy (London, 21 November 1977)

Caption: On 21 November 1977, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates a note containing the reply from the WEU Council to Recommendation 297 on a European armaments policy, which is largely based on the proposal from the French delegation (WPM(77)25/1). The Council notes that it has urged the WEU Member States to make every effort to maintain a viable European armaments industry by ensuring the interoperability of their equipment and standardisation. The Council also refers to the mandate given to the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) to produce an analysis of the situation of European industry in the armaments sector and to the importance of the work of the independent European Programme Group (IEPG), which will be able to provide the SAC with some of the data it needs for its analysis. Finally, the Council affirms that it has always supported the initiatives of the North Atlantic Council and its dependent bodies in the areas of armaments and the standardisation and interoperability of equipment.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's note. Recommendation 297 on a European Armaments policy. London: 21.11.1977. C (77) 144. 4 p. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. Organs of the Western European Union. Year: 1972, 01/02/1972-30/11/1977. File 202.411.09. Volume 1/1.

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/reply_from_the_weu_council_to_recommendation_297_on_a_european_armaments_policy_london_21_november_1977-en-9e19fb79-bd74-4835-b787-e2cc794f7b3a.html



Last updated: 13/10/2016

WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

W.E.U. RESTRICTED

C (77) 144 revised

Original: English/French

21st November, 1977

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Recommendation 297
on a European armaments policy
(C (77) 86)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith a draft reply to Assembly Recommendation 297.

This draft will be submitted to the Council for approval at their meeting on 22nd November, 1977.

AS

9, Grosvenor Place,
London, S.W.1.

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Draft reply to Recommendation 297

(WPM (77) 25 and 25/1)
C (77) 144

1. The Council take full account of the economic and military reasons for greater co-operation in the production and procurement of armaments, as argued in the preamble to the Assembly's recommendation. They appreciate the need to offset the consequences of the rising cost of the advanced defence systems now being developed, and of the proliferation of equipment types. They have missed no opportunity of urging the governments of member States to pursue, in all appropriate bodies, the objective of maintaining a viable European armaments industry. This objective should be achieved by ensuring the inter-operability of existing equipment between all the member States of W.E.U. and by standardisation between them as far as possible. The Council also recognise that the process of procuring and manufacturing defence equipment should, inter alia, ensure the maintenance of a viable European armaments industry, possessing a research and development capacity in the most advanced sectors.

The maintenance of such an industry is essential for the common defence of the countries of western Europe and plays a vital part in their economy by providing many jobs.

The way to safeguard this industrial and technological potential lies through the organisation of co-operation between the countries of Europe.

In this connection, it should be borne in mind that the western armaments industries in fact differ widely in level and cannot engage in open competition, which might be damaging to them.

This is why the European members of the Atlantic Alliance have started to co-operate on the implementation of specific projects within the independent European Programme Group.

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2. In the Council's view, recent major developments, which have strengthened the links between the W.E.U. countries in the respect, should be seen in this light.

The Council refer to the mandate given to the Standing Armaments Committee to produce a descriptive analysis of the situation of the European industry in the armaments sector.

The Council also welcome the formation of the independent European Programme Group (I.E.P.G.) whose first resolution listed the following essential aims as a means of increasing the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance in the armaments sector:

- a) the more effective use of funds for research and development;
- b) increased efforts to promote interoperability and standardisation by the most appropriate means;
- c) maintenance of a valid industrial and technological basis for the European defence industry;
- d) strengthening the European factor in relation to the United States and Canada.

The Council fully acknowledge the importance of the independent European Programme Group not least as a forum for defining national requirements with a view to joint production of armaments, and recognise the advantage of using the results of the Group's studies. To this end, they agreed at their meeting in Strasbourg on 26th April, 1977, that, while preparing its descriptive analysis, the Standing Armaments Committee should receive and use certain data which the I.E.P.G. had already produced and was willing to supply. In the Council's view, this arrangement also meets the point several times raised by the Assembly concerning the risk of duplicated studies of the same subjects by the I.E.P.G. and the S.A.C.

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3. The Council have at all times given their support to decisions taken by the North Atlantic Council and its dependent bodies concerning co-operation between the member countries of the Alliance on armaments and standardisation and interoperability of equipment. In this connection, they refer to their reply to Recommendation 281.

4. The Council note with satisfaction the Assembly's interest in the descriptive analysis of the armaments industry in member countries now being carried out by the Standing Armaments Committee.

The Council can give an assurance that the Assembly will be given full information on this analysis immediately the work of the Standing Armaments Committee has made sufficient progress.