

Draft reply from the French delegation to the WEU Council to Recommendation 362 on international industrial consortia and collaborative arrangements for the production of high technology military equipment (London, 29 January 1981)

Caption: In a note dated 29 January 1981, the Secretary-General circulates the draft reply from the French delegation to the Council of Western European Union to Recommendation 362 on international industrial consortia and collaborative arrangements for the production of high technology military equipment. The Council shares the WEU Assembly's concern, and the Member States intend to pursue their cooperation efforts in the field of armaments. But the Council considers that it is difficult to entrust the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC) with the task of monitoring the progress made in the Atlantic Alliance in the area of interoperability and standardisation of defence equipment. Given that not all members of the independent European Programme Group (IEPG) are members of the SAC, information on the IEPG's activities can only be supplied to the Assembly members in a national framework and insofar as their governments participate in IEPG. In order to establish a 'transatlantic dialogue', there must be close European cooperation and the problem of harmonising the standards in force on both sides of the Atlantic must be resolved.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's note. Recommendation 362 on industrial consortia and collaborative arrangements for the production of high technology military equipment. London: 29.01.1981. WPM (81)11. 7 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: 1980, 01/12/1980- 30/09/1984. File 202.411.11. Volume 1/1 .

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URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/draft_reply_from_the_french_delegation_to_the_weu_council_to_recommendation_362_on_international_industrial_consortia_and_collaborative_arrangements_for_the_production_of_high_technology_military_equipment_london_29_january_1981-en-cbd589b4-36de-48ce-8c4d-4aa0955b6fc4.html



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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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29th January, 1981

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Recommendation 362

on international industrial consortia and
collaborative arrangements for the production
of high technology military equipment
(C (80) 171)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith a draft reply, prepared by the French delegation, to Recommendation 362 on international industrial consortia and collaborative arrangements for the production of high technology military equipment.

This draft will be considered by the working group at its next meeting on 9th February, 1981, at 3.15 p.m.

RT

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

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Draft reply to Recommendation 362

prepared by the French delegation

1. In the present state of the relations between W.E.U. and NATO, it would appear difficult to entrust the S.A.C. with the task of "monitoring" the progress towards achieving the interoperability and standardisation of defence equipment within the Alliance. The Alliance, in fact, has its own structures for fulfilling this task and they do not need to be "overseen", as it were, by the S.A.C.

2. As the Council have in the past made clear to the Assembly, not all the member States of the I.E.P.G. are members of W.E.U. Consequently, it does not seem logical to establish a true link between the I.E.P.G. and the Assembly as this would result in the latter being supplied with information by nations that are not members of both institutions. Such information, therefore, can only be transmitted to the W.E.U. parliamentarians within a national framework and insofar as their governments participate in the I.E.P.G.

/3. As the Assembly ...

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3. As the Assembly is aware, the development of cooperative armaments programmes is, moreover, a long and arduous task requiring, in the countries concerned, consensus with regard to industrial, economic, military and political interests. A multilateral and "high-level political decision" enabling such programmes to be developed and taken without considering the possibility of establishing this consensus at the levels specifically concerned would run the risk of serious setbacks that politicisation or premature institutionalisation would bring about. Cooperation in the matter of armaments is more readily achieved by pragmatic and patient endeavour than by declarations of principle, whose limitations have been shown by past experience.

4. The "transatlantic dialogue" and the "two-way street" are necessities. In order to implement them, two conditions must be met:

- European cooperation in the matter of armaments must first have acquired sufficient weight for the dialogue to be a balanced one;

- the problem of harmonising the standards in force on both sides of the Atlantic should be satisfactorily solved, as recently exemplified by the transfer of the Roland licence to the United States.

/5. The problem ...

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5. The problem of "requests for proposals" issued by military staffs touches on an area in individual State regulations that is very sensitive. The only likely solution would be for consortia to become the general rule, thus making them indispensable interlocutors.

6. The member States are in fact maintaining their efforts through the Independent European Programme Group to harmonise to the maximum extent possible the requirements of their armies and their re-equipment plans. They clearly intend to continue these efforts and in this connection, therefore, fully share the Assembly's concern.

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RECOMMENDATION 362

on international industrial consortia and
collaborative arrangements for the
production of high technology military equipment

The Assembly,

Aware that in spite of repeated political recommendations and constant efforts at an official level progress towards the standardisation and interoperability of defence equipment within the western Alliance remains inadequate;

Conscious that as economic recession and the growth in the price of petroleum products limit resources for defence and place additional constraints upon national defence budgets, improved cost-effectiveness in weapon procurement will become even more necessary;

Believing that collaborative definition, development and production of high technology defence equipment can bring substantial benefits of commonality between the procuring services in Europe as well as important savings in development costs, and a larger assured market for the participating industrial companies;

Understanding the need to preserve as widely as possible within the European armaments industry an independent capability to design, develop and build high technology weapons systems;

Realising that the impetus towards collaborative defence equipment projects should be commercial and industrial as well as military and logistic;

Considering that differences in operational requirements and procurement time-scales continue to be an unnecessarily major obstacle to effective international collaboration in the field of military equipment in Europe;

/Convinced that ...

Convinced that progress towards more effective collaboration in the high technology military equipment sector lies not through the evolution of new bureaucratic structures but by a practical and pragmatic approach at an industrial level, allied to the closest co-operation between national military staffs and above all a common political will shared at the highest level in Europe to see joint collaborative solutions to the individual requirements of Alliance nations,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Monitor on a regular basis through the Standing Armaments Committee progress towards achieving the interoperability and standardisation of defence equipment within the Alliance, and encourage where practical Western European industrial collaboration to achieve these objectives;
2. Persuade the governments of the Western European Union countries to establish a link whereby the Assembly of Western European Union is kept regularly informed of the work of the Independent European Programme Group (IEPG) as this Assembly is the only European parliamentary assembly with a locus standi established by treaty on defence matters, and has invaluable connections with national parliaments and ministers;
3. Invite the governments of member countries to convene a West European strategic summit at the earliest practical opportunity to seek agreement at the highest political level on the collaborative definition and development of the next generation of military projects such as a new European combat aircraft (ECA) to replace the Jaguar in the French and British air forces and to replace the Phantom in the German air force;
4. Promote a European policy for high technology weapons with a view to ensuring the development of a genuinely balanced transatlantic market whereby the standardisation of equipment within the North Atlantic Alliance as a whole would be enhanced: such a two-way street on a strictly equitable basis between the United States and Western Europe should involve on an increasing scale co-operative production programmes and the placing of offset work rather than outright purchases of equipment "off the shelf";

/5. ...

5. Press the member nations to ensure that when their military staffs issue requests for proposals (RFPs) to industrial manufacturers to meet a specified military requirement, they issue RFPs to existing industrial consortia as well as to individual firms;

6. Continue to press member countries working through the Independent European Programme Group to harmonise to the maximum extent possible the requirements of their armed forces and the joint phasing of their re-equipment plans.