

Draft reply from the French delegation to the WEU Council to Recommendation 297 on a European armaments policy (London, 14 November 1977)

Caption: On 14 November 1977, the Secretary-General of the Council of Western European Union (WEU) circulates a draft reply from the French delegation to Recommendation 297 on a European armaments policy. The French draft particularly emphasises the importance of maintaining an armaments industry, which provides many jobs and plays a vital role in common defence, but it notes that safeguarding this industry requires cooperation between European countries, as demonstrated by the Atlantic Alliance's independent European Programme Group. The interoperability of equipment is essential for military effectiveness. However, general standardisation, which would result in a rationalisation of armaments production between Europe and the United States, would actually endanger the future of the European industries: if the Western armaments industries engage in open competition, it would jeopardise the European defence effort.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's note. Recommendation 297 on a European Armaments policy. London: 14.11.1977. WPM(77)25/1. 3 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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URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/draft_reply_from_the_french_delegation_to_the_weu_council_to_recommendation_297_on_a_european_armaments_policy_london_14_november_1977-en-1188c521-414f-4cf2-9165-df4cfc7e92e8.html



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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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14th November, 1977

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

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

The Secretary-General circulates herewith a draft reply, prepared by the French delegation, to Assembly Recommendation 297 on a European armaments policy.

This draft will be considered at the next meeting of the working group on 16th November at 11 a.m.

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

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Draft reply to Recommendation 297
prepared by the French delegation

1. The maintenance of a viable armaments industry in Europe is a necessity. The industries concerned play an essential part both in the economy of the European countries, where they provide many jobs, and in the common defence, because the peoples of Europe would have no feeling of involvement in their own defence if they had no research and development capacity in the most advanced sectors and lacked first-class industrial resources.

The way to safeguard this industrial and technological potential lies through the organisation of co-operation between the countries of Europe. This is why the European members of the Atlantic Alliance have started to co-operate pragmatically, on the implementation of specific projects, within the independent European Programme Group.

2. The military effectiveness of the Alliance depends on the interoperability of the equipment held by the armed forces of the various countries. This concept is, therefore, one of the main concerns of all the allies. An ad hoc committee has recently been set up by the North Atlantic Council to give political impetus to the study of a number

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of specific problems. The first results obtained by this committee are encouraging. It will now have to define ways and means of ensuring the interoperability of future equipment and checking its performance.

3. General standardisation, which would ultimately mean the rationalisation of armaments production between Europe and the United States, is not only an extremely ambitious objective but would even endanger the future of the European industries. The western armaments industries in fact differ widely in level and cannot engage in open competition, which would be damaging to them and might jeopardise the European defence effort. A cautious line must therefore be taken until the organisation of co-operation between the European countries has made substantial progress.

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