

Reply by the WEU Council to Recommendation 337 on political conditions for European armaments cooperation (London, 12 March 1980)


Caption: On 12 March 1980, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates the Council’s reply to WEU Assembly Recommendation 337 on political conditions for European armaments cooperation. The final text reproduces the draft prepared by the United Kingdom delegation, also adding that the Council is not empowered to make any statements to the Assembly on behalf of the independent European Programme Group (IEPG). But it will continue to encourage exchanges of information between the two organisations, and members of the Assembly are free to question their own governments about the IEPG’s work.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General’s note. Assembly Recommendation 337. London : 12.03.1980. C(80)40. 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: 1979, 01/03/1979- 30/08/1980. File 202.411.10. Volume 1/1.

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URL:
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/reply_by_the_weu_council_to_recommendation_337_on_political_conditions_for_european_armaments_cooperation_london_12_march_1980-en-8c8bedd9-17cc-47ba-b9fb-3d5d2578ca37.html

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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C (80) 40

12th March, 1980

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Assembly Recommendation 337

(C (79) 163)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the Council's reply to Assembly Recommendation 337.

This reply, adopted by the Council at their meeting on 12th March, 1980, has been forwarded to the Assembly (CR (80) 3, V, 2).

Handwritten signature

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London, S.W.1.

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Reply to Recommendation 337
on political conditions for European
armaments co-operation

1. The Council agree that all efforts should be made to promote co-operation in the defence equipment field and to exploit suitable opportunities in the interests of member countries.

2(a). All members of W.E.U. contribute, together with the five other members of the group, to the annual I.E.P.G. equipment replacement schedule. By cataloguing replacement intentions for a period of some 15 years ahead this provides a comprehensive description of the demand side of the European armaments market. On the supply side mention should be made of the S.A.C.'s continuing work in this direction and of the studies undertaken in the I.E.P.G. Panel III. However, the present system of armaments co-operation in Europe is a sequential process in which matching national requirements (demands) are considered against production possibilities (supplies) in participating countries or elsewhere. "Supply" in this context is a complex matter since substantial development work and new production investment are required for many modern weapons. The Council do not consider that the cause of equipment co-operation would in practice be greatly advanced by formalising the collection of "Supply" information through an international organisation.

2(b). There are formidable theoretical and practical difficulties in devising methods suitable to the needs of different governments for analysing choices of international armaments programmes from even the most comprehensive information. The technical, economic and social issues are very complex, and the nature of national interests involved do not lend themselves to uniform evaluation. Collective international analysis of such information, leading to agreed conclusions which are capable of implementation, is unlikely to be feasible at present. Furthermore, compromises on national equipment requirements are often necessary to secure agreement in

/collaborative projects: ...

collaborative projects: national governments alone have to take the decisions. The Council are doubtful of the value of creating further international machinery to supplement national policy makers' analysis of alternative methods of meeting equipment needs.

2(c). No customs duties are payable on the transfer of armaments or any other manufactured goods between W.E.U. countries, or other E.E.C. states.

2(d). The Council do not believe that specific legislation is required to facilitate the formation of transnational bodies producing armaments. As the Assembly is aware, several consortia, such as Euromissile and Panavia, already exist. Moreover, in the Council's view, legislation governing international bodies producing armaments should not be separated from the general body of national and E.E.C. company law.

2(e). The Council do not believe that transfer of technology between industries in member States of W.E.U. can be significantly improved by legislation. In their view the primary requirement is the agreement of acceptable transfer terms within specific projects.

2(f). Sharing the concern expressed by the Assembly, the Council agree that every effort should continue to be made to halt the illegal trading of arms.

3. The W.E.U. Council are not empowered to make any statement to the Assembly on behalf of the I.E.P.G., but will continue to encourage appropriate exchanges of information. There are five members of the I.E.P.G. who are not members of W.E.U. Formally therefore the making of a report on its activities to the W.E.U. Assembly is a matter for the Chairman and wider membership of the I.E.P.G. to consider. It is, however, open to members of the Assembly to question their own governments about developments in the I.E.P.G. through their national parliaments.