

Reply by the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 335 on political conditions for European armaments cooperation (London, 29 October 1979)


Caption: In its note dated 29 October 1979, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates the final reply by the Council to Assembly Recommendation 335. The text reproduces the draft by the French delegation (WPM(79)22) except for the last paragraph, in which the French had emphasised the impossibility of dealing with the question of trade in arms in a purely European framework and noted that this could even be counterproductive since it would oppose the national interests of European countries as they are seeking to cooperate.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General's note. Assembly Recommendation 335. London : 29.10.1979. C (79)132. 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_assembly_recommendation_335_on_political_conditions_for_european_armaments_cooperation_london_29_october_1979-en-ed0d8bac-b796-4808-a163-c90fcb6ebdd9.html

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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C (79) 132

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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Assembly Recommendation 335

(C (79) 87)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the Council's reply to Assembly Recommendation 335.

This reply, approved by all delegations, has been forwarded to the Assembly.



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London, S.W.1.

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Reply to Recommendation 335
on political conditions for European
armaments co-operation

In their reply to Recommendation 297 the Council explained why they consider it necessary to develop armaments co-operation between European countries and in their reply to Recommendation 325 they described the common European line of approach to offers of co-operation in the framework of the transatlantic dialogue; they also defined the aims which, in their view, should guide the action of member countries, whilst acknowledging the difficulties of such an undertaking, since it is carried out by countries whose armaments industries have widely differing structures and levels of development.

The Council wish to reaffirm the importance they attach to the continuation of the work at present being carried out, with a view to achieving greater harmonisation of national policies which should lead to genuine co-operation on specific programmes; in this connection, they consider that the work undertaken by the Independent European Programme Group and the study at present being made by the Standing Armaments Committee meet the Assembly's concern about the technical and political direction it would wish such co-operation to take.

As the Assembly is aware, only the legal part of the S.A.C.'s study on the armaments sector of industry in the member countries has so far reached the Council; indeed the S.A.C. was not in a position to submit its final report when the Ministerial Council met in Rome on 16th May, 1979; that meeting did, however, confirm the S.A.C.'s mandate and agreed that the first part of the economic study should be completed both swiftly and to the best effect, with the co-operation of the administrations concerned.

When the final report from the S.A.C. is received, the Council will not fail, as was stated by the Chairman in Office at the second sitting of the Twenty-fifth Ordinary Session, to consider how the Assembly might be informed of its content and its principal conclusions. It is still too soon, in the present state of this study, to express a view as to the practical follow-up action to be taken. The study may enable governments

/for the first time ...

for the first time to have a detailed and comparative analysis of the armaments industries in the member countries and assist them to direct their choices and their programmes towards increased co-operation.

Within the I.E.P.G., in the expert groups, European countries also continue to study the possibility of joint production in certain sectors of armaments; at the same time, they have started a dialogue with the United States with the basic hope of conserving their share of European interests while co-operating with that country for the production of certain types of armaments.

In their reply to Recommendation 325, the Council stressed the difficulties encountered by some countries which are members of the I.E.P.G. but not of W.E.U. with regard to passing on the results of the work of that group to the Assembly of the Organisation.

The Council have noted the Assembly's concern regarding the dangers of the trade in arms in areas where peace is threatened. This is an important problem which involves different political factors in each country; it would be unrealistic to deal with it in the European framework only, since in fact this excludes the principal armaments exporting and importing countries.

On the other hand, bearing in mind its responsibilities in this respect, every European country could draw relevant conclusions from the results of joint action that might be taken between countries of the same geographical area with a view to voluntary limitation of their own imports; such consultations, which would also bring in the main supplier countries, would indeed make it possible to envisage concerted limitation on the sales of conventional weapons.