

Reply by the WEU Council to Assembly Recommendation 329 on the industrial bases of European security (London, 21 November 1979)


Caption: On 21 November 1979, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates the Council's final reply to Assembly Recommendation 329 on the industrial bases of European security. Most of the amendments proposed by the French delegation (WPM(79)25/1) have been included in the final version. The Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD) is a body that aims to improve the opportunities for standardisation and interoperability of the equipment used by the countries in the Atlantic Alliance. The independent European Programme Group (IEPG) is responsible for identifying opportunities for collaboration between European members of the Alliance in the design and production of defence equipment. The two organisations have worked on the harmonisation of procurement procedures wherever this has been found possible or desirable. The Council believes that both the framework necessary to encourage cooperation and the structure required for decision-making already exist. The priority is therefore to set up specific projects rather than to devise new structures.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Secretary-General note. Assembly Recommendation N°329. London : 21.11.1979. C(79)146. 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: 1979, 01/06/1979-30/11/1979. File 202.413.25. vol 1/1 .

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/reply_by_the_weu_council_to_assembly_recommendation_329_on_the_industrial_bases_of_european_security_london_21_november_1979-en-ef267f20-6241-4c5d-8dba-e997077ddfe4.html

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S NOTE

Assembly Recommendation 329

(C (79) 87)

The Secretary-General circulates herewith the Council's reply to Assembly Recommendation 329.

This reply, adopted by the Council at their meeting on 21st November, 1979, has been forwarded to the Assembly (CR (79) 10, II, 1).

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Reply to Recommendation 329
on the industrial bases of European security

1. The Council recognise the usefulness of identifying weapon systems which can be the object of collaborative production, of achieving improved interoperability where appropriate and of seeking areas where European efforts need to be particularly concentrated. The machinery for this sort of consideration already exists however. Within the Alliance as a whole, CNAD devotes considerable efforts to achieving interoperability in specific equipment areas and is at present testing a periodic armaments planning system designed to improve co-operation between the member countries, particularly by increasing opportunities for standardisation and interoperability of the equipment used by them. As the Assembly is aware, the I.E.P.G. bears the main responsibility for identifying opportunities for collaboration in the design and production of defence equipment between European member countries. Its purpose includes the strengthening of the European factor in relationship with America and the maintenance of a healthy European defence industrial base. As part of its work the I.E.P.G. also looks regularly at areas of technology in the defence field to which member States should pay special attention.

Furthermore, as the Council observed in their reply to Recommendation 335, the study at present being made by the Standing Armaments Committee of W.E.U. may provide governments with 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.

2. Industrial co-operation in collaborative projects has taken several different forms. In every project, the form of co-operative structure adopted must be that best suited to the particular circumstances. The Council believe that the governments, ministries and industries of member States are already fully aware of the advantages and disadvantages of different co-operative structures.

/3. European ...

3. European governments are very conscious of the importance of certain areas of advanced technology for both civil and military applications. In this connection they make every effort to extend their co-operation to these particular fields, either under CNAD and I.E.P.G. auspices or bilaterally as appropriate, with those nations who have similar interests and requirements. Such co-operation can take the form of information exchange or collaborative research and development for projects. Devising further formal methods for co-operation of this sort does not seem for the time being likely to promote co-operation.

4. All nations have over the years devised procurement procedures best suited to their own circumstances. These are constantly being refined, and both CNAD and the I.E.P.G. have done work on harmonising procedures wherever this has been found possible or desirable. Certainly one example is in the field of industrial or intellectual property rights. This is a vital component of co-operation, and a sub-group of CNAD has been examining the problems. The Council do not believe that this work should be duplicated.

5. Permanent industrial consortia may well be established in the future as an effective means of undertaking collaborative armaments projects. However, industrial and management structures must be tailored to the particular circumstances of each project, and, before the establishment of a permanent consortium, the participants would have to be fully satisfied that there would be sufficient long-term work for the consortium, involving, in every case, the same nations and firms. The Council are aware that in CNAD, the I.E.P.G., FINABEL considerable work is being done on agreeing concepts, specifications and on examining replacement timetables. The framework necessary to encourage co-operation already exists. As with industrial and managerial arrangements, methods of finance for co-operative projects must be flexible and must be those best suited to the circumstances of the project and to the budgetary systems of the participating nations.

/6. The Council ...

6. The Council believe that the necessary framework for decision-making already exists. The governments concerned are necessarily concentrating on the specific problems raised by the consideration of particular projects where their interests and requirements appear to be in sufficient conformity. The Council believe that the improvement and tightening of European co-operation require first and foremost the consideration and setting up of concrete projects rather than the devising of new structures and methodology.