

Recommendation 362 of the WEU Assembly on international industrial consortia and collaborative arrangements for the production of high technology military equipment (Paris, 4 December 1980)

Caption: On 4 December 1980, the Assembly of Western European Union (WEU) adopts Recommendation 362 on international industrial consortia and collaborative arrangements for the production of high technology military equipment. The Assembly is 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. It recommends that the Council invite the member governments to work actively towards armaments cooperation. Through the Standing Armaments Committee (SAC), the Council should monitor progress within the Atlantic Alliance on the interoperability and standardisation of defence equipment and encourage Western European industrial collaboration. The member governments should also be persuaded to establish a link whereby the Assembly is kept regularly informed of the work of the independent European Programme Group (IEPG). The document also calls for the convening of a Western European strategic summit to seek political agreement on the collaborative definition and development of the next generation of military projects.

Source: Assembly of Western European Union. 'Recommendation 362 on international industrial consortia and collaborative arrangements for the production of high technology military equipment (Paris, fourteenth sitting, 4th December 1980)' in Proceedings: Twenty-sixth ordinary session: Second Part, Vol. IV, Minutes: Official Report of Debates. Paris: Assembly of WEU. December 1980, pp. 56-57.

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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 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. 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.