

## Document by the Belgian and French delegations on the desirability of armaments standardisation (19 March 1955)

**Caption:** On 19 March 1955, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) sends the Committee of Experts a document submitted jointly by the Belgian and French delegations on the desirability of armaments standardisation. The note outlines the operational, logistical and economic factors that influence the choice of equipment to be standardised.

**Source:** Western European Union. Interim Commission. Working Party on Production and Standardisation of Armaments. Committee of Experts- Desirability of standardisation. Secretary-General's Note. PWG/E/24. 19.03.1955. 5p. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://anlux.lu/>. Western European Union Archives. Armament Bodies. CPA/SAC. Comité permanent des armements. File CPA-034.

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WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION  
INTERIM COMMISSION

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WORKING PARTY ON PRODUCTION AND STANDARDISATION OF ARMAMENTS

CONFIDENTIAL

PWG/E/24  
French Original  
19th March, 1955.

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

DESIRABILITY OF STANDARDISATION

Secretary-General's Note

The Secretary-General circulates herewith a document, submitted jointly by the Belgian and French Delegations, on the desirability of standardisation.

A first version of this document was discussed by the Drafting Committee at its meeting on 17th March, 1955.

The Committee of Experts will consider the attached new version at a future meeting.

DESIRABILITY OF STANDARDISATION

1. The decision as to the desirability of adopting a new type of equipment is influenced by a certain number of circumstances, of which the principal are the following:

- (a) the programme already laid down by each country for the renewal of its equipment and for equipping new forces;
- (b) urgency of the requirement;
- (c) funds expected to be available;
- (d) the age and probable length of life of the equipment in service (in each country);
- (e) time required for the manufacture of the items of equipment considered;
- (f) rate of technical progress.

2. In selecting the equipment to be standardised certain factors must be considered and weighed one against the other.

For the greater clarity of this exposé, these factors may be classified in three groups:

- operational factors,
- logistic factors,
- economic factors.

The more important of these factors are enumerated below.

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### 3. Operational factors

#### (a) Operations in the field

Effect of standardisation on the interchangeability and interoperability of units in their use by an integrated command;

Effect of the diversity of the functions to be fulfilled and of the conditions of use on the scope of standardisation.

#### (b) Training

Effect on the training of the personnel and cadres of the units using standardised equipment.

### 4. Logistic factors

#### (a) Supply of units in the field

Effect on the ease of logistic supply of units in the field, in particular where they are integrated in a group comprising troops of several nationalities.

#### (b) Volume of reserve equipment

Effect on the diversity and the volume of reserve stocks, especially spare parts and stores on the mobility and efficiency of logistic units.

#### (c) Training

Effect on the time and money required for the training of specialists for supply and maintenance units.

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5. Economic factors

(a) Costs

Effect on the unit cost price of the amortization of initial expenditure (research, plant, starting of production) on a larger number of articles.

Effect on the unit cost price of the choice of an item of equipment, or of components, of which the specifications preclude the advantages of mass-production for the civilian market.

Effect on the overall expenditure on military equipment e.g., the possible replacement of an item of equipment by another more expensive type; possible reduction of the amount of equipment required through the choice of a type having a superior performance.

(b) Production capacity

Effect of the strategic dispersal, possibly between several countries, of industrial centres capable of co-operating in the manufacture of the item under consideration.

Effect of such dispersal on production methods, industrial equipment, employment of labour, import of raw materials, balance of payments, currency problems.

Effect on the maintenance of the necessary industrial capacity in the case of emergency.

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(c) Research, development and tests

Effect on co-operation in research, development and tests with the possible repercussions of such co-operation in the economic, technical and political fields.

6. Conclusion

A study of the principal factors enumerated above shows that the effect of each one of them on the final balance depends not only on the type of equipment under consideration but also on economic conditions and military considerations in the various countries at the time when standardisation is contemplated.

7. Each standardisation problem forms therefore a specific case and must be dealt with as such.