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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Richard Howitt, Ana Maria Gomes and Jan Marinus Wiersma

on behalf of the PSE Group

on small arms and light weapons

European Parliament resolution on small arms and light weapons

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the its resolutions of 15 March 2001¹, 15 November 2001², and 19 June 2003³ on combating the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons,
- having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. reaffirming its concern over the continuing proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which exacerbates armed conflict and instability, facilitates terrorism, undermines sustainable development and the rule of law, and contributes to grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law,
- B. affirming its intention to further engage the EU and its Member States in a constructive and regular dialogue on contents and priorities for EU policies in international and regional initiatives and negotiations on small arms and light weapons control,
- C. convinced that the EU and its Member States have a critical role to play in the development and promotion of adequate international and regional standards to combat the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons,
- D. encouraged by the EU Presidency statement on small arms of 17 February 2005⁴ at the UN Security Council, which welcomed the recognition of the explicit need for states to accelerate and conclude legally binding agreements on tracing, brokering and transfers of small arms,
- E. welcoming further the active EU support, in the UN Open-ended Working Group on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons, for a legal agreement and for the inclusion of ammunition for small arms and light weapons in the instrument's scope,
- F. welcoming also the publicly expressed support by the Luxembourg Presidency (in the 11 May 2005 EP plenary debate in Strasbourg) and by the governments of Finland, the UK, the Netherlands, Ireland and Poland, for an Arms Trade Treaty, as well as their efforts to work together with partners in order to build a regional and global consensus on the need for global legal standards for transfers of small arms and light weapons,
- G. concerned, however, at the lack of EU commitment in the UN tracing negotiations to the creation of follow-up mechanisms to the tracing instrument that would allow for the development of relevant best practices guidelines to complement minimal global standards,

¹ OJ C 343, 5.12.2001, p. 311.

² OJ C 140, 13.6.2002, p. 587.

³ P5_TA(2003)0293.

⁴ EU Presidency Statement. Reference PRES05-013EN, 17.2.2005.

- H. hoping and expecting that more EU Member States will publicly declare their active support for efforts to build consensus on the need for an Arms Trade Treaty to ban arms transfers which entail a clear risk of contributing to serious violations of human rights or international humanitarian law,
 - I. regretting further the slow progress of the UN's broad-based consultations on combating the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons and the lack of a firm commitment to negotiating an international agreement on arms brokering controls,
 - J. recognising, nevertheless, that as of the end of April 2004, the UN Firearms Protocol has come into being as a legally binding instrument since Poland and Zambia became the 40th and 41st countries to ratify it; underlines that the Protocol commits UN member states to regulating the manufacture, export, import and transit of firearms,
 - K. whereas UN member states will meet in June 2005 for the third substantive session of the UN Open-ended Working Group on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons,
 - L. whereas UN member states will meet in July 2005 for the UN Biennial Meeting of states to consider the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, and in June/July 2006 for the UN Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action,
1. Recommends that the Council and the Member States promote a dynamic review mechanism for the negotiated UN tracing instrument, including the creation of a technical experts' group mandated to draft best practices guidelines on marking, record-keeping and tracing for small arms, light weapons, and related ammunition;
 2. Urges the Council and the Member States to actively build a regional and international consensus on global standards for arms transfers, based on the existing obligations of states under international law and the need for an international Arms Trade Treaty;
 3. Recommends in this context that the Council and the Member States encourage strong debate at the July 2005 UN Biennial Meeting of States on the UN Programme of Action, with the objective of negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty, to start directly after the 2006 UN Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action;
 4. Calls on the Council and the Member States to relaunch their efforts to build a regional and international consensus on the need for an international treaty on the control of small arms and light weapons brokering;
 5. Decides to adopt an own-initiative report in due time for the 2006 UN Review Conference, with the aim of scrutinising EU actions and policy with regard to small arms and light weapons, and to further engage the Council and the Member States on their relevant policies at regional and international levels;

6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the EU Presidency, the Council, the Commission, the Governments of the Member States, the Presidents of the national parliaments of the Member States, and the UN Secretariat.