

Wednesday, 15 November 2006 - Strasbourg

Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), cluster bombs and conventional weapons (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - (PT) In recent years we have witnessed the erosion of the most important legal instruments for combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is no exception. We are more vulnerable than ever to devastating terrorist attacks.

The main ideas contained in this resolution, on which notable consensus has been reached across all political groups in Parliament, are decades old and applicable to other conventions, too. These ideas can be summed up under three headings: universalisation, application and verification. The notorious cluster bombs and anti-personnel mines must be combated. These immoral arms must also be outlawed. These bombs spread death indiscriminately and the fact that they have a low rate of immediate explosion means that they continue to kill innocent people many years after conflicts have ended.

The recent war in Lebanon, in which Israel left the country mined with thousands of cluster bombs, should give us the impetus to ban, once and for all, the manufacture and use of all kinds of cluster bomb, as we have done with anti-personnel mines. Perhaps merely adding a new protocol to the existing Convention against certain conventional weapons is not enough; perhaps the time has come for a specific convention. This does not matter, provided the EU takes action and the human race joins forces to eradicate these heinous weapons.