

Tuesday, 13 March 2007 - Strasbourg

Non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - (PT) The forthcoming conference in Vienna is an opportunity for the European Union to take the lead. Europe's position should be based on two essential ideas: strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency and pressing for compliance with Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In this respect, I agree that updating Trident is incompatible with Article 6 of the NTP and, since it affects the United Kingdom, it also affects the European Union.

The European Union must support the multilateral approach to uranium enrichment and ensure that all countries sign the additional protocol to the safeguard agreement. That may prevent further challenges like those posed by Iran.

In addition, the EU must do all it can to ensure that the 13 steps to disarmament identified at PrepCom 2000 are implemented as quickly as possible. Unless Europe takes it upon itself to uphold the essential balance on which the NTP is based, PrepCom 2007 may mark the beginning of the end for the Treaty.

Mr President, in this respect the fact that Poland, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom are unilaterally considering taking part in the US missile defence system is a scandalous threat to European commitments.

What is the point of having a European Union or even NATO if it is not to discuss the strategic future of Europe?