

ORAL QUESTION O-0079/00

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Rolf Linkohr, on behalf of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy
to the Council

Subject: Community policy in the decommissioning of weapons of mass destruction and the ETRI disarmament initiative

The European Parliament was able to introduce provisions into the Fifth Framework Programme which make it possible to call on the Commission to take initiatives for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. In December 1999 the Council adopted a 'Joint Action' and has made available funds for the destruction of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in Russia. Parliament should be kept informed about these proceedings in more detail. The decommissioning of weapons of mass destruction throws up a number of technical and financial problems. More than a year ago, the US President, Bill Clinton called into being the ETRI (Expanded Threat-Reduction Initiative) to explore solutions to these problems. Some European Member States and, to a certain extent, the Commission as well, are participating in ETRI. It is essential for Parliament to know the exact role of the Commission in this context.

Enhanced European commitment to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction is part of the European Security Policy. This raises questions concerning the financial and technological contribution which can be made by the European Union. It has also implications for European research policy.

1. How will the Council participate in the ETRI disarmament initiative?
2. Does the Council agree that the EU will in future participate more actively in the field of disarmament, and how does it assess the 'Joint Action' adopted by the Council on 17 December 1999?
3. Can the Council assess the financial implications of the European Disarmament Initiative for the Community budget?
4. How does the Council envisage keeping the European Parliament involved and informed? Will it issue a communication on disarmament?
5. Does the Council consider disarmament to be part of a European Security Policy?

Tabled: 23.05.2000

Forwarded: 24.05.2000

Deadline for reply: 14.06.2000