

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0117/08

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Renate Weber, Johan Van Hecke, Fiona Hall and Elizabeth Lynne,
on behalf of the ALDE Group
to the Council

Subject: EU Code of conduct on arms exports - finding effective means of curtailing illicit arms transfers

The European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports was adopted by the Council on 8 June 1998. Ten years later, the European Council has still not approved the Common Position on this matter.

The recently released 'Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Insights on Peace and Security' examines the impact of EU air safety regulations on the activities of air cargo operators that are suspected of being involved in destabilising arms transfers. It presents new statistics showing that 80 air carriers which have been named in United Nations or other reports on arms trafficking have since 2006 been banned or targeted by EU air safety regulations. The report also shows that air carriers involved in illegal arms transfers consistently violate international air safety regulations, which demonstrates the importance of strict application of EU air safety controls. These regulations are an under-utilised but potentially promising tool for stemming the flow of illegal and destabilising arms transfers.

1. Is the Common Position on Arms Exports scheduled for inclusion on the agenda of the General Affairs Council?
2. In the light of the recent SIPRI research on the impact of EU air safety regulations on the activities of air cargo operators that are suspected of destabilising arms transfers, does the Council think it is appropriate to consider launching an effort to amend or further tighten existing air safety regulations and increase maritime safety standards accordingly in order to curb transportation of illicit weapons by unsafe transporters?

Tabled: 12.11.2008

Forwarded: 13.11.2008

Deadline for reply: 04.12.2008