Press release | 17.11.2015

Arms exports

MEPs call for stronger controls, and measures to prevent arms getting to violent regimes and terrorists

The European Parliament's foreign affairs committee yesterday evening adopted a report setting out its assessment of how EU rules on arms exports are being implemented. Commenting after the vote, Green MEP **Bodil Valero**, who is the European Parliament's rapporteur/draftsperson for the report, said:

"MEPs have today voted to send a clear signal to EU governments on the need to tighten up EU rules and practices on arms exports. The existing rules are binding but implementation needs to be consistent. With European arms continuing to be used in conflicts around the world, the broad cross-political support for stronger arms export control in the European Parliament is welcome.

"Europe's security environment has changed drastically, with armed conflicts destabilising both its eastern and southern neighbourhoods. At the same time we have seen European arms ending up in the hands of repressive regimes, terrorists and criminals, fuelling the conflicts in those countries. This underlines why stricter risk assessment before granting arms export deals, as called for in the report, is so important. If we are concerned about security, human rights and international peace, we cannot afford to be soft on arms exports. To this end, the report criticises France, the UK and Germany, Europe's three biggest arms exporters, for failing to meet their legal obligation to supply accurate and complete arms export data to the EU.

"The report also tackles how arms are getting to terrorists within Europe. MEPs have supported our call for stricter rules on deactivated weapons, such as those used in the Charlie Hebdo attack in France. By classifying semi-automatic weapons as military and introducing end-user inspections and combating arms smuggling, we will lessen the risk of arms ending up in the wrong hands. We hope the report will now receive strong support from the entire Parliament when it votes in plenary."

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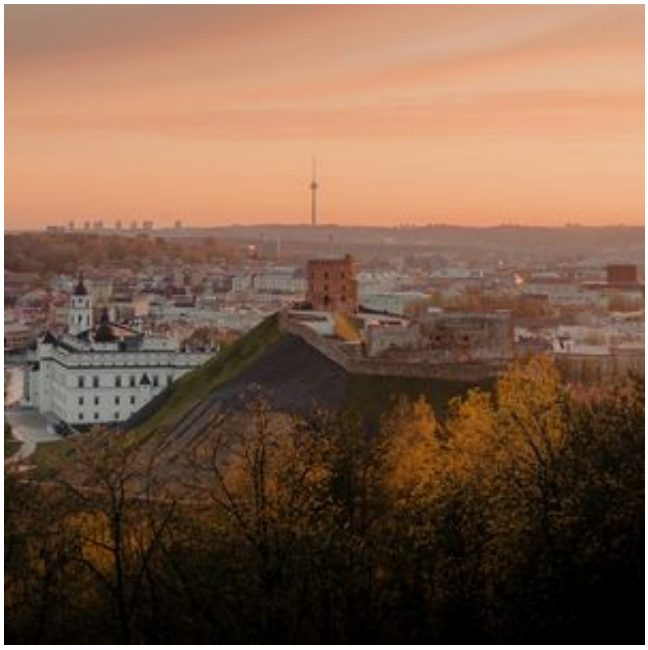
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Bodil Valero

Vice-President

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