

Press release – EU arms exports: need for more control and transparency



In light of the EU's growing importance in arms production, MEPS call for strengthened public oversight on exports of military equipment and technology, in a resolution adopted on Wednesday with 341 votes for, 124 against and 230 abstentions.

Assessing how member states were implementing the EU's [common rules](#) governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment, MEPs remind member states that these rules, in line with European values, take precedence over any national economic, social, commercial or industrial interests.

Independent surveys ([Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#)) show that arms exports from the EU-28 amounted to some 26 % of the global total in 2015-2019, collectively making the EU-28 the second largest arms supplier in the world after the USA (36%) and followed by Russia (21%).

Middle East and North Africa the most prominent regional destinations

The countries of the Middle East and North Africa, regions in which several armed conflicts are ongoing, remain the foremost regional destinations for exports, according to the last two annual reports on EU exports of military technology and equipment (for the years [2017](#) and [2018](#)).

MEPs also warn that there are no sanction mechanisms in place should a member state engage in exports that are clearly not compatible with the criteria in the EU common rules.

Setting up an interactive online arms exports database

MEPs believe that the publication of the two last reports represents progress towards a common EU position on arms exports. Still, they note that while all

member states submitted data for the 2018 report, one third of them were incomplete in their submissions.,

Calling for more uniformity in the data submitted, MEPs welcome the Council's decision to introduce [clear standards](#) on how member states should provide their figures. MEPS also welcome the decision to transfer the annual report onto an interactive online database that should be up and running before the 2019 report is published.

The rapporteur [Hannah Neumann](#) (Greens/EFA, DE) said.. "This report recognizes that increasing European cooperation and EU funding in arms production and development requires EU-level monitoring and control. We simply say: Where EU money is involved in arms development, we also need an enforceable mechanism for EU control of any future exports. This would be based on the restrictive application of the eight existing criteria of the EU Common Position on arms exports and allow for sanctions for cases where member states do not comply with these rules."

Background

[Common Position 2008/944/CFSP](#), adopted in 2008, is a legally binding set of rules containing eight criteria that are to be taken into account when issuing export licenses. The criteria include the respect for human rights in the country of final destination, the preservation of national and regional stability as well as how compatible arms exports are with the development of the recipient country.

[Press release – MEPs want new cars to respect emission limits under real driving conditions](#)



On Thursday, Parliament adopted its position with 485 votes to 169 and 42 abstentions on the Commission proposal to re-introduce legal exemptions (through a so-called [conformity factor](#)) on nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions from light passenger and commercial cars (Euro 5 and Euro 6) for type approval of vehicles tested under real driving conditions in order to comply with the EU General Court [ruling of 13 December 2018](#).

Real driving emissions tests

Previously, data on car emissions such as NO_x were obtained through laboratory tests. The EU is the first region in the world to use real driving emissions (RDE) tests to measure such pollutants emitted by vehicles while driven on the road. However, emissions from these vehicles in real-world driving conditions tend to be significantly higher.

To address technical uncertainties regarding measurements obtained through [Portable Emission Measurement Systems \(PEMS\)](#), which measure emissions from engines while they are being used, the Commission introduced the so-called '[conformity factor](#)', which allows for higher emissions under real driving conditions to take into account a margin of error.

To reduce NO_x emissions, Parliament wants the conformity factor currently in place to be annually lowered, based on assessments by the [Joint Research Centre](#). After being immediately lowered from 1.43 to 1.32, it should be gradually reduced and cease to apply by 30 September 2022, after which only the raw data from tests carried out under real driving conditions would be used to determine compliance with EU emission limits.

The report also asks that the Commission establish by June 2021 more stringent requirements for the portable measuring equipment to be used for RDE tests.

Quote

Following the vote, Parliament's rapporteur on the file, [Esther De Lange](#),

said: “Today’s outcome is based on a broad agreement between the political groups. We have to be realistic about the discrepancy between emissions measured in laboratories and those measured in real-driving conditions by taking into account statistical and technical uncertainties linked to these measurements. At the same time, it’s important to show ambition by gradually lowering the value for the conformity factor through annual downward revisions, based on the scientific assessments of the Joint Research Centre.”

Next steps

Parliament is now ready to start negotiations with EU member states to agree on final rules.

Background

According to the [2019 Air Quality Report](#) by the European Environment Agency, air pollution led to more than half a million premature deaths in 2016 and is the number one environmental cause of premature death in the EU. As passenger cars produce 40% of total EU NOx emissions, they are a significant source of air pollution, especially in urban areas.

Emission measurements in the automotive sector were the subject of an EP inquiry committee (EMIS), set up in 2016 after the ‘diesel scandal’. You can read its key recommendations [here](#).

[Iraq: High Representative/Vice-President Borrell meets Foreign M](#)



On 16 September, High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, Fuad Hussein, in Brussels.

They discussed issues of common interest, including EU-Iraq bilateral

relations, domestic reforms and plans for early parliamentary elections in Iraq, the work of the Global Coalition against Da'esh, as well as recent regional developments.

High Representative Borrell reiterated the EU's firm intention to further strengthen bilateral engagement and intensify dialogue and cooperation with Iraq, mainly through the full implementation of the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Meetings of the Sub-Committees on Trade and Energy under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement were identified as next institutional steps.

High Representative Borrell and Foreign Minister Hussein also discussed the ongoing cooperation between the EU and Iraq. Between 2018 and 2020, the EU mobilised 480 million euros for development, as well as a package of 159 million euros in support of Iraq's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, combining different instruments and funds, with a focus on the health and socio-economic sectors. High Representative Borrell and Foreign Minister Hussein agreed on the importance of continuing on the path of reforms in Iraq, including in the security sector.

High Representative Borrell recalled the EU's willingness to support Iraq in addressing the challenges it was facing, and that he firmly intended to contribute to this, also in the framework of the mandate given to him by EU Foreign Ministers on 10 January, to carry out diplomatic efforts with all parties to contribute to de-escalation in the Gulf region, support political dialogue and promote a regional political solution.

[Press release – Parliament requests more support for regions to make energy transition a success](#)



On Wednesday 16 September, MEPs adopted Parliament's position on the Commission proposal on the JTF with 417 votes in favour, 141 against and 138 abstentions.

Parliament insisted on a substantial increase in JTF resources from the EU budget for 2021-2027 (EUR 25 billion in 2018 prices compared to EUR 11 billion proposed by the Commission and the decrease to EUR 7,5 billion agreed by the European Council). This amount should be supplemented by EUR 32 billion in current prices, as proposed under the EU Recovery Instrument.

Moreover, MEPs confirmed key provisions outlined in the [draft recommendations](#) by the Regional Development Committee:

- Providing support to people, the economy and the environment,
- Creation of a "Green Rewarding Mechanism", allowing 18% of the total JTF resources to be allocated to member states that reduce their greenhouse gas emissions more quickly than others,
- A share of 1% of the total amount will be allocated for islands, and 1% for the outermost regions,
- A co-financing rate of up to 85% of costs for eligible projects across the EU,
- Possibility to transfer resources from other cohesion funds on a voluntary basis,
- Broadening the scope to include microenterprises, sustainable tourism, social infrastructure, universities and public research institutions, energy storage technologies, low-emission district heating, smart and sustainable mobility, digital innovation, including digital and precision farming, projects fighting energy poverty, as well as culture,

education and community building,

- A derogation for investments in activities related to natural gas, for regions heavily reliant on the extraction and combustion of coal, lignite, oil shale or peat, if they qualify as “environmentally sustainable” in accordance with the [Taxonomy Regulation](#) and comply with six additional cumulative conditions,

In addition, only 50% of the national allocation will be available for countries which have not yet committed to a 2050 national target for climate neutrality, until such a target is adopted.

Quote

Rapporteur Manolis Kefalogiannis (EPP, GR) said: “The EU is aiming, as part of the European Green Deal, to socio-economically transform regions relying on fossil fuels and carbon-intensive industries. On 6 July, the Regional Development Committee successfully approved the draft report establishing the Just Transition Fund as a whole. The JTF will become a key component of the EU’s cohesion policy. We are now ready to kick off inter-institutional negotiations; at the same time, the JTF will be closely linked to the MFF 2021-2027 and the new Recovery Instrument (Next Generation EU).”

Next steps

Inter-institutional negotiations are expected to start as soon as possible, on all matters except for the financial envelope, which is to be agreed upon in parallel talks on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

Background

The Commission [published](#) in January a legislative proposal on the Just Transition Fund (JTF), the first legislative proposal implementing the priorities set out in the European Green Deal, followed in May by an [amended proposal](#) containing an increase of the Fund’s resources.

In order to ensure that negotiations with the Council can start as soon as possible, the [Regional Development Committee](#) requested that both the draft report and the mandate for negotiations be put to the EP plenary vote directly. According to [Rule 71](#), if Parliament as a whole were to reject a committee’s decision to enter into negotiations, the report could only be voted on during the following plenary session, thus delaying negotiations between Parliament, Council and the Commission.

[Press release – EP TODAY](#)



Debates

From 8.45, Parliament will hold debates on

- The need for an immediate and humanitarian EU response to the current situation in the **refugee camp in Moria**;
- The humanitarian situation in **Mozambique**;
- Combatting the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of **children**;
- The importance of urban and green infrastructure – European Year of **Greener Cities 2022**;
- The situation in the **Philippines**, including the case of Maria Ressa;
- The case of **Denis Mukwege** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Watch the debates live on Parliament's [Multimedia Centre](#) and on [EbS+](#)

Votes

Results from yesterday evening's votes will be announced at 8.30, on, among other things,

- Setting up the **Just Transition Fund**;
- Revised **testing rules** so cars respect EU limits on **NOx emissions**;

- **EU arms export rules.**

The **first voting session** lasts from 9.30 to 10.45 with **results** announced at **12.30**. During this voting session, MEPs will cast their final vote on, among other things,

- the state of rule of law in **Poland**;
- the situation in **Russia** and the poisoning of Alexei **Navalny**;
- the situation in **Belarus**;
- the dangerous escalation and the role of **Turkey** in the **Eastern-Mediterranean**;
- how to address the **shortage of medicines**;
- a strategic approach to **pharmaceuticals in the environment**;
- combating negative attitudes towards **people with Romani background** in Europe.

The **second voting session** lasts from 13.00 to 14.15 with **results** announced **16.30**. During this voting session, MEPs will cast their final vote on, among other things,

- **cultural recovery** of Europe.;
- COVID-19: EU coordination of **health assessments and risk classification** and the consequences on Schengen and the single market;
- the importance of **urban and green infrastructure** – European Year of Greener Cities 2022;
- **financing the COVID-19 vaccines** strategy and the impact of the Corona Response Investment Initiative Plus;
- the situation in the **Philippines**, including the case of Maria Ressa;
- the case of Dr. **Denis Mukwege** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC);

- the humanitarian situation in **Mozambique**