



Europäischer Metallgewerkschaftsbund
Fédération Européenne des Métallurgistes
European Metalworker's Federation

Press Information ♦ Press Information

Brussels, 11th December 2003

ENSURING A FUTURE FOR THE DEFENCE INDUSTRY IN EUROPE LIES IN INDUSTRIAL POLICY DIALOGUE WITH WORKERS' REPRESENTATIVES

“Consolidation of the defence industry has to be a top priority for the industrial policy agenda of the European Union – and it has to include employment strategies that are discussed and negotiated with the trade unions if consolidation and restructuring are to be successful”, stated Reinhard Kuhlmann, EMF General Secretary, at the EMF’s Conference on the Future of the European Defence Industry held in Brussels on 10th and 11th December 2003.

“If there is a step towards the establishment of a peace and security identity for Europe and a first step towards a regulated single market for armament procurement within the European Constitution, this would signify progress. But it is not enough. We have to give Europe the real ways and means to fulfil its obligations in a world of increasing insecurity and threats to peace,” he added.

Elmar Brok, MEP, the European Parliament representative to the Intergovernmental Conference received strong support from the Conference participants when he presented the latest development in respect of the constitutional discussion of the Intergovernmental Conference. “Give the European Constitution strong support and do not let us fall back into a free trade zone”, he urged.

Over the two days of the conference, some 130 participants from 13 European countries discussed the new industrial policy challenges for the defence sector in Europe.

Keynote speeches on the challenges for the European defence industry in the light of the development of the European security and defence policy and an EU armaments policy were delivered by Elmar Brok, Chairman of the EU Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy, Werner H. Engelhardt, Advisor to the German Minister of Defence, and Corrado Antonini, President of the European Defence Industries Group (EDIG).

In a panel discussion, chaired by Dr. Peter Schaaf, IG Metall, Germany, on the perspectives of the land forces equipment sector, industrialists, trade unionists and government representatives all underlined the need for a common European answer to the takeover of high-tech companies in the armaments sectors by US capital. The main demand was for a level playing field and clear industrial policy support to guarantee an equal footing as regards transatlantic cooperation

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In the second panel discussion on the perspectives of the defence aerospace sector, chaired by Emilio Lonati, FIM-CISL, Italy, high appreciation was expressed for the integration model of EADS. Support for the consolidation process in respect of European projects should be given high priority if we are to achieve a balanced multinational approach.

The third panel on the perspectives of the naval shipbuilding sector, which was chaired by Jacques Lépinard, FEAE-CFDT, France, and included a representative of the Commission, a representative from industry and a representative of a works council, discussed the role of the state and the market and the need for ongoing consolidation in the naval shipbuilding industry.

The final panel on strategic options for the restructuring of the defence industries was chaired by John Wall, Amicus, UK, and included Laurent Giovacchini of the French Ministry of Defence, Michael Dugher, Special Adviser to the UK Secretary of State for Defence, Pierre-Philippe Bacri of the European Commission's DG Enterprise and Pascal Meunier, Senior Vice-President of Thales, and Dr. Peter Schaaf of IG Metall. They discussed the need to change Article 296 of the European Treaties and to establish specific rules for a single European armaments market. The State responsibility to safeguard its sovereignty and the possible new challenges of European integration of sovereign national member states were discussed taking into consideration the different levels of integration and market orientation in the EU member States.

There was unanimous support for the creation and practical work of a European armaments agency, which is a major step towards the creation of a single European procurement market. The UK representative Michael Dugher in particular highlighted the importance of a constructive dialogue with the trade unions in the arms industry as an industrial policy issue.

In his conclusions, Reinhard Kuhlmann focused on three demands put forward by the EMF:

1. The consolidation of armament industries has to be accompanied by anticipatory employment and social measures. Social dialogue on the European level is more than ever necessary is long overdue
2. The EMF has asked the Commission to start a study on competitiveness and employment in the European armaments industry. This industry has to be addressed specifically within the framework of the new industrial policy of the EU.
3. The EMF strongly supports all steps in the direction of abolishing Article 296 of the European Treaties. However, the EMF strongly urged the creation of multinational rules for market access as a next step.

The EMF Report on the Future of the European Defence Industry prepared for the Conference by the Consultants Syndex (France) and PCG-Consult (Germany) will be available on the EMF website very shortly: www.emf-fem.org.

For further information please contact:

Editor, Reinhard Kuhlmann, EMF General Secretary + 32 2 227 1010

Defence sector: Isabelle Barthès + 32 2 227 1012

