

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0030/08/rev.1

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Elly de Groen-Kouwenhoven, Angelika Beer and Caroline Lucas, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group, Luisa Morgantini, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, on behalf of the ALDE Group, Ana Maria Gomes, on behalf of the PSE Group, Ģirts Valdis Kristovskis, on behalf of the UEN Group, Karl von Wogau and Stefano Zappalà, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group to the Commission

Subject: Global treaty to ban uranium weapons

The use of Depleted Uranium in warfare runs counter to the basic rules and principles enshrined in written and customary International Humanitarian and Environmental Law. Therefore, in November 2006, the European Parliament strengthened its previous calls for a moratorium on uranium weapons by adopting its resolution on 'biological weapons and inhumane conventional weapons'. There is increasing support worldwide. In March 2007 Belgium adopted its national law to forbid the manufacture, use, storage, sale, acquisition, supply and transit of uranium weapons. In May 2007 the European Parliament exhibited the pictures and testimonies of victims of uranium weapons in Iraq (70% of Iraq is covered with DU dust). In October 2007 the Italian Defence Minister disclosed that between 1996 and 2006, 37 Italian soldiers most probably died because of exposure to uranium weapons on their missions to Iraq and the Balkans. In several other countries similar cases occurred, affecting hundreds of veterans. In the UK and the United States increasing concern over DU's health effects has led to the implementation of testing regimes for returning soldiers. In December 2007 the UN General Assembly passed, by an overwhelming majority, a resolution highlighting concerns over the military use of uranium. The resolution, entitled 'Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium', urges UN member states to re-examine the health hazards posed by the use of uranium weapons. Growing evidence of uranium's chemical toxicity and potentially carcinogenic nature dictates the application of the Precautionary Principle in line with EU law.

1. How is the Commission planning to follow up this European Parliament resolution?
2. What measures is the Commission taking – in line with its obligations under the precautionary principle – to avoid exposure of its humanitarian personnel to DU in contaminated regions?
3. Does the Commission plan to open a dialogue with Euromil, which is in favour of a ban?
4. What funds does the Commission have available to make an inventory of contaminated areas, carry out an environmental investigation into the contaminated areas and assist in the cleaning up of contaminated areas?
5. What funds is the Commission ready to spend on information measures for civilians, aid workers and military personnel?
6. What funds does the Commission have available to provide medical investigations and health surveys of uranium victims and compensation for those victims?

Tabled: 01.04.2008

Forwarded: 03.04.2008

Deadline for reply: 10.04.2008