



Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Since 2001 we, as the European Parliament, have been seeking the introduction of a moratorium and world wide ban on uranium weapons. We confirmed this in 2006 with the adoption of a resolution on chemical weapons and inhumane conventional weapons. The resolution adopted at the UN in 2007 urged the Member States of the United Nations to examine the potential damage from DU to human health. In May 2008, the European Parliament passed, with an overwhelming majority, its fourth and most far-reaching resolution yet against the use of uranium weapons. MEPs called for the international community to start negotiations for the establishment of an international treaty to globally ban the production, transfer and use of so-called depleted uranium in conventional weapons. In response to the wealth of new information available, we reasserted our request to the European Council and Commission to launch new studies concerning DU's threat to health and the environment.

We call for EU member states to submit reports on DU to the UN Secretary General in line with last year's General Assembly resolution. We urge for a halt to the deployment of military and civilian personnel in areas where DU has been used and request member states to provide information on DU hazards to service personnel and civilian organizations. We call for maximum transparency by signposting contaminated areas and for a financial mechanism for victim assistance in contaminated areas.

The efforts made by member states are of crucial importance to get a world wide ban. The first necessity is to reach a political consensus between Member States and we need the cooperation of the UN, to lay the groundwork for the global treaty.

The use of DU weapons has devastating consequences on human health and the environment. DU is not a temporary inconvenience, but stays active for millions of years. Outside the body DU travels with water or wind, contaminating regions and even whole countries. The toxic and radioactive dust released by these weapons causes cancers and genetic damage. Veterans and civilians have children with serious birth defects. The most basic precautionary principle demands the stigmatisation of these weapons even before the extensive circumstantial evidence pointing to their indiscriminate and carcinogenic effect is replaced by irrefutable scientific proof.

The fight for a worldwide ban on uranium in weapons and ammunition is part of our general fight for arms control and disarmament. Uranium weapons cause indiscriminate harm. It is crucial to act against violations of humanitarian, international and environmental law. We hope the EC, Council and Member States demonstrate in practice their sense of responsibility, given this is a matter of public health.

Doing nothing is unquestionably the result of a choice, not of a lack of available resources and means.

MEP Els de Groen MEP Caroline Lucas MEP Angelika Beer
MEP Luisa Morgantini MEP Maria Gomes MEP Elisabeth Lynne
MEP Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck MEP Kathy Sinnott