

PRESS RELEASE
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EU NEEDS A STRONGER COMMITMENT AGAINST DEPLETED URANIUM WEAPONS

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"European Union should set an example for the International Community for a worldwide moratorium on Uranium weapons" urged by **Luisa Morgantini, Vice-President of the European Parliament** in a press conference organized today together with **Els de Groen (Dutch MEP of the Green/EFA Group)** on the occasion of the International Day of Action against Depleted Uranium Weapons.

A recent resolution passed at the UN First Committee in New York, urging -by an overwhelming majority (122 countries including Japan voted for)- UN members States to re-examine the health hazards provoked by using of uranium weapons that also causes widespread and long lasting radioactive contamination of the environment. "Even it represents a very important step - added Luisa Morgantini - four countries inside the EU such as France, Great Britain, Netherlands and Czech Republic, voted against this resolution".

"It's urgent to raise the awareness on this issue inside the European Institutions –declared Luisa Morgantini– For this reason we hosted today at EP the ICBUW's (the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons) launch of a global disinvestment campaign against investments by high street banks and investment companies around the world in the manufacturers of uranium weapons, presenting new findings concerning the policy around depleted uranium weapons".

"The use of uranium weapons has devastating consequences on human health and the environment. That's why we call for an immediate end to the use of uranium weapons and for the disclosure of all locations where uranium weapons have been used".

"These weapon systems are radiological and chemically toxic. That's why, since 2001 the European Parliament has made repeated calls for a moratorium to be introduced on the use of uranium weapons, but the implementation of the ban is far to be accomplished in the European Union. All the European countries should follow the Belgian example,that in March 2007, became the first country in the world to ban uranium weapons and armour as well, invoking the following damning evidence of uranium's chemical toxicity: unfortunately till today at least 18 countries still possess these weapons, the use of which is contrary to existing humanitarian law".

"The Italian government also should immediately follow the Belgian example and ban the use of 'depleted' uranium weapons or any other industrially manufactured uranium,that already caused too many illnesses and medical problems, among the Italian soldiers who took part to the different military missions in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iraq and Balkans. Furthermore it's indecent that there is no clearness even about the records reporting the real numbers of dead and ill people because of the effects of the uranium weapons: the big discrepancy between the information provided by the Italian Defence Ministry and what declared by the Military Observatory, that denounced 161 deaths and 2536 illness due to uranium since 1996, is unacceptable. Now it is time for truth and commitment."