

*Wednesday, 6 April 2011-Strasbourg*

*Explanation of vote:*

*Pino Arlacchi (S&D)*. - Mr President, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen are three tyrannies being challenged by their own citizens and these citizens deserve our unconditional support. Until this moment the EU's action vis-à-vis the wave of democratisation in the region has been uncertain and lacking in strength and credibility. If we want to increase both, we should start first of all to eliminate the double standards we used in the past.

We supported these autocracies in several ways and we, the Europeans, along with Russia and the United States, sold them almost any sort of armaments. Now we are lamenting the consequences of our arms trade with the Gulf autocracies in terms of casualties, in terms of innocent victims of the weapons we sold to them.

If we want to be credible we should cancel all contracts in armaments to these countries and to the Gulf Cooperation Council, and ask for the establishment of an arms embargo in all of the North Africa and Middle East region. The reduction of their military budget will be a dividend to invest in a fund for the democratic transition.

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