Open Letter to Members of the European Parliament

The EU peace project is under threat

Brussels, 2 September 2019

Dear Madam, dear Sir,
Member of the European Parliament,

As a coalition of 61 organisations we are writing to express our deep concern about a number of policy proposals which, taken together, call into question the EU's founding values of human rights, peace and disarmament.

As a newly-elected MEP, you will have to give your opinion on EU external action priorities and make final decisions on a number of key files, in particular the next EU budgetary cycle for 2021-2027.
Looking at the current proposals and the global context in which they occur paints a worrying picture of the EU's future path, which increasingly tends towards a controversial military approach to global issues.

Since 2017, EU funds have been diverted for military-related spending, with a €590 million envelope to fund military-industrial Research and Development[1] and another €100 million to enable the EU to provide support for 'Capacity Building of military actors in support of Security for Development' (CBSD)[2].
The proposal for the next Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF 2021-2027) takes a further step down that road by giving priority to the security and military interests of the EU, while neglecting its traditional strengths like conflict resolution, diplomacy, mediation, institution-building and economic incentives to promote peace.

Before the EU elections, dozens of civil society organisations urged candidates to 'save the European peace project' and 'work towards a peaceful Europe'.

➔ *Today we urge you as elected MEP to go beyond the general motto "a Europe that protects", and start analysing whether the proposed priorities and funding are truly the most efficient ways of making Europe and the world a safer place to live in.*

✓ **The proposed 2021-2027 MFF diverts financial and human resources to military and security "solutions"**

In the initial proposal[3], allocations related to security, border management and defence would rise at an unprecedented rate, respectively multiplied by 1.8, 2.6 and 22. The overall EU budget, however, would hardly increase (+ 1.5% in current prices 2018).

For example, two thirds of the Migration and Border management heading would go to border management (€21.3 billion); and the new European Defence Fund would dedicate €13 billion to the industrial Research and Development (R&D) of new or enhanced weaponry. This is more than the Humanitarian Aid budget (€11bn).

In contrast, thematic programmes under the new external financing instrument - the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) - would only benefit from a very moderate increase, reaching only €7 billion in total: €3 billion for Global challenges, €1.5 billion for Human rights and democracy, €1.5 billion for Civil society actors and €1 billion for 'Peace and stability'. On the contrary, capacity building of military actors (CBSD, including the provision of non-lethal equipment) would be very prominent in the NDICI, with no ceiling as regards the amounts dedicated to it. Yet it is the aforementioned thematic civilian work which allows the EU to make a significant difference, particularly in fragile states or authoritarian regimes.

✓ **This re-allocation of funds is a consequence of a more fundamental paradigm shift**

Creating a fully-fledged European Defence Fund (EDF) or a so-called 'European Peace Facility' (EPF) goes beyond providing additional funds to European initiatives: it opens new areas of cooperation whose legitimacy and contribution to the EU Treaty objectives ('to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples') are highly questionable.
The €10.5 billion off-budget EPF will train and equip the security and military apparatus of partner countries, potentially including with lethal weaponry. Peace organisations are quite critical of this proposal as its intended contribution to peace is far from guaranteed.

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1 €90 million for the Preparatory action for defence research (PADR 2017-2019), €500 million for the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP 2019-2020)
2 This implies "train and equip" activities to military forces in partner countries
3 EC proposal COM(2018)321 of 2 May 2018; all figures are expressed in current prices

The new external financing instrument, the NDICI, is also illustrative of this shift: it would merge and replace well-established stand-alone funding mechanisms[4] and put a stronger emphasis on migration and security. Migration is defined as one of the mainstreamed NDICI objectives, on an equal footing with peace, poverty eradication or democracy and the rule of law, among others. This is a very strong concern for civil society, as the risk is high that this Instrument will serve to advance the migration and security interests of the EU rather than the actual needs of local populations.

✓ **Such path would work against peace and disarmament, risk feeding conflicts and neglect the peaceful resolution of conflicts as well as the fight against their root causes, exacerbated by climate change**

The European Defence Fund will contribute to the development of controversial weapons like unmanned and autonomous systems[5] as well as military applications of artificial intelligence, and will also exacerbate the global arms race by boosting the arms industry's global competitiveness. In turn, weapons proliferation encourages the use of force rather than peaceful solutions.

As for the "security for development" arguments used to justify the CBSD programme and the Peace Facility, there is little evidence that military-focused 'train and equip' efforts can lead to improved peace, justice, and development outcomes - quite the contrary. Even with mitigation measures in place, there is a high risk that EU-funded weapons and support would be used in fragile countries to commit atrocities and fuel violent conflicts.

Research shows that over the past 35 years, 77% of violent conflicts ended through a peace agreement while only 16.4% ended through a military victory. EU funding and attention should therefore focus on creating the conditions for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, including identifying and addressing its root causes.
Climate change, for example, is today widely recognized as a major and sustained risk to global security, contributing to increased natural disasters, conflicts over basic resources, migration and forced displacements, as well as exacerbating other drivers such as poverty, economic shocks and weak institutions.
Yet, the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the fight against their root causes are not sufficiently prioritised. This was recently illustrated in the EU strategic agenda for 2019-2024, which defined migration and the protection of borders as the first priority, with the climate crisis clearly playing second fiddle to an overblown defence agenda.

✓ **The next MFF should focus on peace-building and on the major factors of conflicts and forced migration, such as poverty, human rights violations or climate change. *For this to happen we urge you to:***

- *Stop the Defence Fund by rejecting the provisional agreement[6] in the second reading phase and the €13-billion envelope in the next MFF.*
- *Stop the militarisation of EU borders and ensure that EU funding will prioritise safe, humane and dignified pathways to - and hosting conditions in - Europe, in line with international law and the right to asylum.*
- *Accelerate the pace and scale of action to significantly decrease EU greenhouse gas emissions, in order to reduce them by 65% by 2030 in line with the IPCC special report, and to zero by 2040.*
- *Maintain separate external financing instruments for development aid, human rights & democracy, humanitarian assistance and peace-building in the next MFF with significantly increased budgets; introduce a cap for CBSD activities in the NDICI.*
- *Call on the EU Council to take a step back as regards the so-called Peace Facility, particularly its 'train and equip' component, and to engage with civil society to discuss in depth its political parameters and added-value.*
- *Call for EU external policies to prioritise the peaceful resolution and prevention of conflicts and the fighting of their root causes, including by driving a 100% renewable, climate resilient, zero carbon economy at the global level, and by helping poor countries to become energy independent and adapt to climate change.*

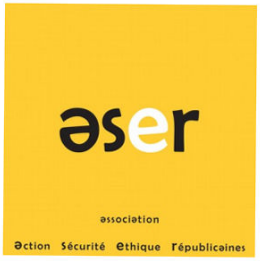
You will find in the annex more background information as well as links to more detailed documents produced by civil society actors on the concerns raised in this letter.
We hope you will find them instructive and we remain at your disposal should you have questions.
Yours sincerely,

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4 In particular t he European Development Fund (EDF), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the Instrument contributing to Peace and Stability (IcSP) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

5 To the exception of lethal fully autonomous weapons, e.g. killer-robots, which will not be eligible to the Fund from 2021; however they are in the pilot programmes for 2017-2020 (PADR & EDIDP)

6 After a 2-months Trilogue, a provisional political agreement was reached on 27 February 2019 and voted by the EP on 18 April 2019


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association
Action Sécurité Ethique Républicaines


attac


AKTION AUFSCHREI
Stoppt den Waffenhandel!


BRICUP
British Committee for the Universities of Palestine




CENTRE DELÀS
D'ESTUDIS
PER LA PAU


AGIR
POUR LA
PAIX


CND


CAMPAIGN
AGAINST
ARMS
TRADE


church and peace


BACBI


christian
aid


In Global Solidarity
comhlámh


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Coordination Nationale
d'Action pour la Paix
et la Démocratie


Cordaid
BUILDING FLOURISHING COMMUNITIES


CORRUPTION
WATCH


CROSOL


CMS
CENTRE FOR PEACE STUDIES


Ekumenická
akademie




AKYS


GIBANJE ZA PRAVICE
Palestincev


Sadankomitea
Committee of 100 in Finland


GSOA


INŠTITÚT ĽUDSKÝCH PRÁV
HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTE

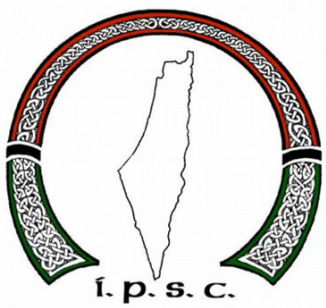

GREENPEACE

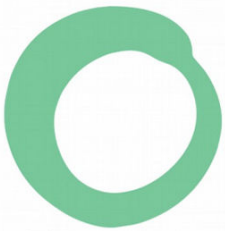



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Friends of the Earth
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NESEHNUTÍ
NEzávislé Sociálně Ekologické HNUTÍ



















Quaker Council for European Affairs









Stop Wapenhandel



Cessez d'alimenter la guerre















TEP







List of signatures

Agir Pour la Paix (BE)
Aktion Aufschrei: Stoppt den Waffenhandel (DE)
ASER - Action Sécurité Ethique Républicaines (FR)
ATTAC Austria (AT)
BACBI - Belgian Campaign for an Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (BE)
BRICUP - British Committee for the Universities of Palestine (UK)
CAAT - Campaign Against Arms Trade (UK)
Centre Delàs – Centre d'Estudis per la Pau J.M. Delàs (ES)
Centre for Peace Studies (HR)
Christian Aid Ireland (IE)
Church and Peace
CNAPD -Coordination Nationale d'Action pour la Paix et la Démocratie (BE)
CND - Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (UK)
Comhlámh – Action for Global Justice (IE)
Committee of 100 in Finland (FI)
CORDAID (NL)
Corruption Watch (UK)
CROSOL - Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity (HR)
Ekumenická akademie (Ecumenical Academy, CZ)
Finnish-Arab Friendship Society (FI)
Friends of the Earth Finland (FI)
GHA - Global Health Advocates
Gibanje za pravice Palestincev (Palestinian Rights Movement, SI)
Greenpeace
GSoA - Gruppe für eine Schweiz ohne Armee (CH)
Human Rights Institute (SK)
ICAHD Finland, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (FI)
IFOR Austria - International Fellowship of Reconciliation (AT)
Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IE)
International Peace Bureau
Kerk en Vrede (NL)
MIR - Movimento Internazionale della Riconciliazione (IT)
Nesehnuti (CZ)
Norwegian Peace Association (NO)
Observatoire des armements (FR)
ODG – Observatori del Deute en la Globalització (ES)
PANA - Peace & Neutrality Alliance (IE)
PATRIR -Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (RO)
PAX (NL)
Pax Christi International
Pax Christi Flanders (BE)
Peace Brigades International
Peace Union (FI)
Privacy International
QCEA – Quaker Council for European Affairs
Rete Italiana per il Disarmo (IT)
SGR - Scientists for Global Responsibility (UK)
SPAS - Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SE)
Statewatch – Monitoring the s tate and civil liberties in Europe
Stop Fuelling War – Cessez d'alimenter la guerre (FR)
Stop Wapenhandel (NL)
Technology for Life (FI)
TNI - Transnational Institute
transform!at (AT)
Un ponte per (IT)
Urgewald (DE)
Vrede vzw (BE)
Vredesactie (BE)
War Resisters' International
Women for Peace in Finland (FI)
Women in Black Austria (AT)

Contact:
Laëtitia Sédou, ENAAT EU programme Officer, laetitia@enaat.org, +32.2.234.30.60

ANNEX
Background information and links to relevant sources (non-exhaustive)

- **About the next MFF and the NDICI**

In the proposal for the next MFF, the budget to security, border management and defence should rise in an unprecedented scale. In particular[7]:

- ✔ Two thirds of the Migration and Border management heading would go to border management (€21.3 billion for the Integrated Border Management Fund and the Frontex agency) and a "significantly reinforced" Internal Security Fund should receive €2.5 billion; all schemes would allow for the purchase of (para)military and/or security equipment.
- ✔ The new European Defence Fund would dedicate €13 billion for the industrial Research and Development (R&D) of new or enhanced weaponry, in particular disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence, as well as unmanned and autonomous systems.
- ✔ A new Military Mobility programme would see €6.5 billion dedicated to facilitate the movement of military personnel and assets across and beyond the EU.
- ✔ The capacity building of military actors (CBSD) would be very prominent in the new external financing instrument, the NDICI (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument), with no cap on the amount of funding which can be allocated to it.
- ✔ Research in the security area and dual-use technology will continue benefiting from significant amounts under the next EU Research Framework Programme, be it via a dedicated envelop (€2.8 billion for 'Inclusive and secure societies') or mainstreamed under other priorities like Digital & Industry or the European Innovation Council. To add on, the defence sector is also increasingly defined as a mainstreamed priority in a number of civilian programmes supporting the industrial base in Europe[8].

Moreover, by merging and replacing very different Instruments that were adapted to address precise needs under specific conditions, the future external aid instrument (NDICI) with standardised practices risks limiting its capacity to achieve what previous programmes were aimed for, e.g. reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, promoting human rights and democratic principles, or supporting peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts. All of it was contributing to tackle important root-causes of armed conflicts and violence.

Useful papers and links:
Joint Position of civil society European Networks on the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2021-2027, June 2018
CONCORD timeline and positions on the next MFF
HRDN Statement "Promoting Human Rights and Democracy in the next EU Multi-annual Financial Framework", March 2018
EPLO Position on the MFF, February 2018
EPLO Blogpost: Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention on the NDICI: An assessment of the European Parliament Position, March 2019
EU risks becoming predominantly military alliance, says Church and Peace, 13 July 2018

- **About the European Defence Fund**

The legality and legitimacy of such Fund is still contested by peace groups and some MEPs. And an increasing number of academicians or think-tanks, and even supporters of a Union of Defence alert that the main features of the Fund and the lack of political will at Member State level will prevent it from resolving duplication and overproduction, or from responding to key capability gaps. The Fund rather looks like a subsidy to the arms industry with a negative impact on peace and disarmament.

It will rather exacerbate the global arms race, by contributing to the industry competitiveness and to *"creating new market opportunities across the Union and beyond"*[9]. As sales outside Europe are key to the survival of the arms industry and the EU Common Position on arms exports control is poorly implemented by EU Member

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7 All figures are expressed in current prices and taken from the EC proposal COM(2018)321 of 2 May 2018
8 E.g. Regional Development Fund, Social Fund, Life, Horizon 2020, Erasmus +, etc. See the European Defence Agency Funding Gateway
9 Draft Regulation establishing the European Defence Fund, art.13 'Award criteria'

States, this will inevitably increase EU arms exports to areas where there is tension or conflict. In turn weapons proliferation encourages the use of force rather than peaceful solutions.

Under derogatory rules, the Defence Fund would be implemented through implementing acts, meaning that your Parliament would not be able to exert its usual oversight role on the use of the Fund. This sets a dangerous precedent against the democratic functioning of the EU, and a similar derogation was already proposed in a civilian programme (the Connecting Europe Facility).

Useful papers and links:
ENAAT Online Information Tool on the EU Defence Fund, and leaflets in English, French, German, Spanish, Dutch
€13 billion for the arms industry – Church and Peace protests against the decision of the majority of the European Parliament on Maundy Thursday
44 non-profit organisations across Europe alert on 4 major risks the European Defence Fund entails
PRIO Policy Brief, The European Defence Fund: Key Issues and Controversies (2019), by Raluca Csernatoni and Bruno Oliveira Martins
Researchers for Peace pledge ; Military work threatens science and security, Nature, 17 April 2018
Publications on arms industry conversion

- **About controversial weapons and ethics**

Under the Defence Fund, R&D on lethal autonomous weapons *"without the possibility of human control over critical functions"*, e.g. killer-robots, will not be eligible for funding. While this move won by the EP is to be welcomed, R&D for other autonomous or unmanned systems is allowed, including armed drones or fully autonomous systems "for "defensive purpose only", as well as other other controversial technologies like incendiary weapons or depleted uranium. But armed drones, for example, are liable to increase insecurity, not reduce it, in particular because it lowers the threshold for the use of force, ushers in permanent war and transfers the risk and cost of war from soldiers to civilians while seducing us with the myth of 'precision'.

Yet the EU is not responding to EP calls for a Common Position that should lead strengthening existing legal norms around their use, and bolster transparency and accountability.

Specific attention will also be put on developing "disruptive technologies", that is military technology that will radically change the way to conduct war, like military uses of artificial intelligence. And the proposed ethical review under the Defence Fund falls short of being transparent and credible: it would mainly rely on industry self-assessments, the list of independent experts to assist the Commission would not be public and a running project could not be stopped on ethical grounds.

Useful papers and links:
https://www.efadrones.org
https://dronewars.net/the-danger-of-drones/
PAX killer robots: https://www.paxforpeace.nl/our-work/programmes/killer-robots , incl. more specific documentation you can find there:
- Killer Robots - What are they and what are the concerns? (490 KB)
- Les Robots Tueurs: De quoi s'agit-il et quelles sont les préoccupations? (487 KB)
- Robots Asesinos: ¿Qué son y por qué resultan preocupantes? (477 KB)
- European positions on lethal autonomous weapon systems - Update 2018 (403 KB)

- **About the security and defence industry**

The question is then to whom those developments will benefit most, if not to peace.
Under this mindset shift towards short-term technological & military 'answers' to face political and societal challenges, the main stakeholders to deliver these answers will be the security-military-industrial complex: its members have been the main advisers and interlocutors of the European Commission regarding security and military research and they have been advocating for "business opportunities" into the EU external policy funds. Today, they are the ones to provide 'solutions' for border control[10], to apply for EU funded security or military R&D[11] and to supply equipments and weapons under the "train & equip" programmes, among others.

[10] For example IBM Belgium, ATOS Belgium and arms manufacturer Leonardo get a Framework contract for the next Entry/Exit System (EES)
[11] EDA gateway page for the arms industry: https://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/eda-priorities/eu-funding-opportunities

Useful papers and links:
'Neo-ConOpticon, The EU security-industrial complex', *TNI, November 2009*
'Securing profits – How the arms industry is hijacking Europe's defence policy', *Vredesactie, October 2017*
'Obscurity surrounds EU military fund's expert groups', *euobserver, 19 April 2019*
'EU defence groups under fire for opacity', *euobserver, 28 September 2018*
Projects funded under the Preparatory Action for Defence Research(PADR)

- **About the so-called ' European Peace Facility' (EPF)**

Labelling the 'European Peace Facility' as a 'peace' fund raises questions as the EPF would finance military training and equipment, potentially including the provision of lethal equipment. Even if engaging security actors in peace-building activities is important for conflict resolution, not all activities in security and defence lead to improved peace, justice and development outcomes. Several components of the proposed EPF are untested areas for the EU and the proposal fails to mitigate adequately the serious risks involved in their implementation.

It is not clear how the EPF could strengthen the EU's ability to exert a positive influence in the world to prevent and end conflicts by granting weapons and ammunition, funding soldiers' salaries, or strengthening the combat capabilities of third-country militaries. Research demonstrate that the risks associated with this approach are high: this type of military assistance can harm peace and development and rarely provides its intended leverage. It often fails to address the underlying drivers of conflict and can instead be counterproductive, leading to unintended consequences, such as the violent repression of peaceful civil society actions, furthering the impunity of military forces, fomenting military-backed violence and conflict, and corruption.

Even with mitigation measures in place, there is a high risk that EU-funded weapons and military support would be used in fragile countries to commit atrocities and fuel violent conflicts. Should EU support be used not for peace but for instigating further violence, this would dramatically hamper the EU's broader political strategy for long-term peace and development and result in significant damage to the EU's global reputation and influence.

Useful papers and links:
EPLO Letter to the Political and Security Committee, January 2019
Joint letter to the European Union Foreign Affairs Council, 13 May 2019
Why EU arming foreign militaries will backfire *(euobserver, Opinion, 28 March 2019)*

- **About climate change**

According to the Global Risks Report 2019 by the World Economic Forum, the top 3 risks in terms of likelihood are all environmental: (1) extreme weather events, (2) failure of climate -change mitigation and adaptation, (3) natural disasters. Climate change is today largely recognized as a major sustained risk to global security, contributing to increased natural disasters, refugee flows and conflicts over basic resources. It also acts as a threat multiplier: it exacerbates other drivers such as poverty, economic shocks and weak institutions, thus fuelling social tensions and threatening to destabilize already vulnerable regions such as the Horn of Africa or the Sahel.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on 1.5°C – endorsed by all the world's governments – makes it clear that allowing the global average temperature to rise by more than another half a degree Celsius, from 1.5 to 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, would be catastrophic.

And the recent EU-tailored Normandy Index, designed and prepared by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), makes a similar stand for Europe: the biggest threat for the EU's strategic autonomy and security is energy insecurity. Yet EU governments also failed to reach an agreement to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, while draft national plans for the coming decade are already insufficient to achieve the bloc's 2030 energy and climate targets, according to the European Commission.

Useful papers and links:
Leaked: EU strategic agenda fails to back urgent action against climate crisis
Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide: Introduction to the Normandy Index, *European Parliamentary Research Service, May 2019*
Peace and Security in 2019, *European Parliament Research Service, 15 May 2019*