

Peace groups denounce new EC initiatives favouring the arms industry and triggering global arms race

“The military-industrial complex 'en marche' at EU level”

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Today the EC released new plans that favour the arms industry and blur the limits of its mandate regarding defence-related issues, paving the way for an over-influential European-level military-industrial complex.

Peace campaigners and the European Network Against Arms Trade warn against this further EC attempt to trivialize the production of weapons and enlarge insidiously its field of competences to defence. *“These proposals will not lead to peace and security, but will only increase the profits of the arms industry and exacerbate the global arms race”*, warns **Wendela de Vries from Stop Wapenhandel**.

Extra EU funding for the arms industry blurring the EC field of competences

The legislative proposal presented by the EC foresees in particular the allocation of €500 million extra EU funding to the arms industry compared to what was proposed in the EC Defence Action Plan of November 2016. These funds would come from unspent allocations in 2019-2020. *“it is particularly worrying that the EC policy is now to divert unspent amounts to the arms industry rather than trying to improve existing programmes”* says **Ann Feltham from CAAT-UK**. Crucial areas are lacking funding like the EU human rights programme, or local civil society actors active in peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts who receive only about €6 million/year from the EU.

And from 2021 the EC contribution to the Defence fund would amount up to €1.5 billion every year. [Internal documents](#) from the EU have recently pointed out that the European Commission has had dozens of meetings with the arms industry. *“These proposals are not in the interest of EU citizens, but only benefiting an industry which is fuelling armed conflicts”* says **Bram Vranken from Vredesactie**.

Commission proposes exception for arms spending on budgetary austerity rules

The draft also proposes that voluntary national contributions complementing this EU funding should be exempted under the Stability and Growth Pact, in other words they would not be taken into account for the 3% deficit threshold that EU countries have to respect. *“It is particularly shocking that when European citizens are paying the price of austerity measures in their everyday life, public spending for arms is considered an investment deserving 'special treatment' while education, health, social care or environment protection are seen as a burden”* adds **Francesco Vignarca from Rete per il disarmo**.

The EU has a critical role to play to confront the major challenges and numerous problems we are being faced with. Climate change, nuclear proliferation and increased inequality are only a few of them. But these problems will not be solved by investing more in weapons. On the contrary, higher military expenditure means less money to tackle these challenges in a sustainable way.

An industry-led policy through lack of political vision will produce no savings

A defence policy is never a goal in itself but is only one of the instruments of a foreign policy.

“As long as a European foreign policy is lacking, a European defence policy is premature. And the difficulties to reach an agreement on a minimalist common military command centre 10 years after the Lisbon treaty demonstrate once again the absence of political will and trust among member states”, says **Laëtitia Sédou from ENAAT**.

Without political leadership, what remains is an industrial policy. The result is a set of proposals that favours arms companies, including their capacity to export sophisticated weaponry, funded with public money, to non-EU countries. *“And there will be no savings either: European NATO countries committed to increase their military spending up to 2% of their GDP and the EU contribution will be an add-on to national spending. Moreover, which country will accept to let go of its own industry or armament system in favour of the neighbour's one?!”* adds **Jordi Calvo from Centro Delas**.

This will not only be a waste of public money but will also exacerbate global instability rather than contribute to “defending” Europe.

More information can be found in the ENAAT website [here](#)

Follow our campaign on Facebook “noEUmoney4arms” and twitter (@_ENAAT)

The European Network Against Arms Trade (ENAAT) was founded in 1984 and involves groups and individuals who see the arms trade as a threat to peace, security and development. We are made up of 16 national campaign and research groups from 13 European countries and 3 European or international organisations.

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More reference:

[European military industry: EU, give us 3.5 billion euros for military research -](#)

[<http://stopwapenhandel.org/node/1844>](http://stopwapenhandel.org/node/1844)

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