

Church and Peace

International Office

Church and Peace - the ecumenical peace church network of communities, training centres, peace organisations and peace service agencies in Europe

PRESS RELEASE

For peace. For human rights. For Europe.

74 organisations call for the rescue of the European peace project.

2 February 2019. In the run-up to the European Parliament elections in May 2019, a broad alliance of 74 organisations and institutions from nine European countries is calling for the rescue of the European peace project. Among the signatories are many peace movement associations, churches and church organisations, the aid agencies Misereor and Bread for the World, and the environmental organisation Greenpeace.

The alliance criticizes the European Union's plans to invest billions in arms research and military cooperation with third countries. The EU must not arm states that wage war or violate human rights. The promotion of peace and human rights must not fall victim to defence against flight and migration.

In view of the large number of violent conflicts, the signatories demand that the EU invest more in nonviolent conflict management.

Everyone in the European Union is invited to sign the appeal at www.rettetdasfriedensprojekt.eu before the elections are held from 23 to 26 May 2019.

Enclosed you will find the full text of the call, a list of the 74 signatory organisations and institutions as well as background information on the three demands to the European Parliament.

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Appeal to the European Parliament

“The Union’s aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples.” (Art. 3, Treaty of Lisbon)

Save the European peace project! For peace. For human rights. For Europe.



The European integration reconciled enemies after the Second World War, making the European Union a model peace project the world over.

Now more than ever, we need a European Union that advocates peace and human rights – at home and beyond its borders.

However, beginning in 2021, the EU plans to invest billions of euros in the European arms industry, joint military operations and even more border security. Peacebuilding and human rights could fall victim to the defence against migration and flight.

We firmly believe that the European Union will only win the hearts of its citizens as a peace project, not as a military power.

Therefore, we call on the delegates of the European Parliament to:

Stand up for a European Union that advocates peace and human rights unconditionally.

- **Campaign for a European Union that adheres to the European peace project instead of becoming a military power.**

We urge the European Union to build on its strengths as a mediator in conflicts and as an alliance for peace through cooperation and collaboration. We oppose the European defence fund to finance the development of armament projects. The Treaty of Lisbon prohibits the financing of armament projects and military operations through the Community budget of the European Union. Delegates of the European Parliament should defend and strengthen these principles.

- **Do not let the European Union provide arms to states that wage war or violate human rights to ward off refugees and migration.**

We call on the European Union and its Member States not to use funds for the armament of armies and militias of non-member countries. The European Parliament must ensure the strict adherence to and further tightening of the European criteria for arms exports vis-à-vis the governments of the European Union Member States.

- **Increase the funds of the European Union for the promotion of nonviolent conflict transformation and human rights.**

We request €7 bn. for nonviolent conflict transformation and peacebuilding and €3 bn. for the promotion of human rights and democracy in the next EU financial framework (2021-2027).

Signatories:

Aachener Friedenspreis • act for transformation • Agir pour la paix • Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden • Antikriegshaus Sievershausen • Arbeitsgemeinschaft Frieden Trier • Arbeitskreis Gehwissen • Arbeitskreis Marburger WissenschaftlerInnen für Friedens- und Abrüstungsforschung • Arbeitsstelle kokon der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern • Associazione di promozione sociale Joint • Berghof Foundation • Bischöfliches Hilfswerk MISEREOR • Brot für die Welt • Bund für Soziale Verteidigung • Church and Peace • Community Christusbruderschaft Selbitz • CSSP - Berlin Center for Integrative Mediation • Dachverband Entwicklungspolitik Baden-Württemberg • Dansk International Cultural Youth Exchange • Darmstädter Signal • Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft-Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen – Bundesverband • Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft-Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen – Landesverbände Baden-Württemberg, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Niedersachsen-Bremen • Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women • Eine Welt e.V. Leipzig • EIRENE Internationaler Christlicher Friedensdienst • Eirene Niederlande • Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kriegsdienstverweigerung und Frieden • Evangelische Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz • Evangelisch-Methodistische Kirche Deutschland • forum crisis prevention • Forum Friedensethik in der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Baden • Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst • Frauen gegen Atomkraft • Frauennetzwerk für Frieden • Friedensforum Duisburg • Friedensinitiative Nottuln • Friedenskreis Pankow • Friedenswerkstatt Mutlangen • Friends World Committee for Consultation – Europe and Middle East Section • Gemeinde Heilig Kreuz-Passion • Gewaltlos leben. Arbeitsgemeinschaft in der Evangelischen Kirche in Mitteldeutschland • Greenpeace • ICJA Freiwilligenaustausch weltweit • Initiative Mexiko • Internationaler Versöhnungsbund – Regionalgruppen Mainz, Cochem-Zell • Internationaler Versöhnungsbund Österreich • Kerk en Vrede • Konstanzer Friedensinitiative • Martin-Niemöller-Stiftung • Mennonite Central Committee West Europe • Norddeutsches Netzwerk Friedenspädagogik • Nürnberger Evangelisches Forum für den Frieden • Ohne Rüstung Leben • Ökumenische Konsultation für Gerechtigkeit und Frieden • Ökumenisches Büro für Frieden und Gerechtigkeit • Ökumenisches Forum Christlicher Frauen Europa • Orthodox Peace Fellowship • Pais • Partner Südmexikos • pax christi Deutsche Sektion • Pax Christi International • pax christi Rhein-Main • peace brigades international – Deutscher Zweig • Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung • Quäker-Hilfe Stiftung • Start with a Friend • Stiftung die schwelle • Stiftung Weltethos • Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation • urgewald • Weltladen Konstanz – Aktionskreis <Dritte Welt>

Why is it important? Background & arguments

In 2019, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union will negotiate the next Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021 to 2027. The outcome will significantly impact European politics in the next few years.

There is reason to fear that the Parliament and the Member States of the European Union will submit to the pressures of right-wing populist movements and therefore invest even more in border fortifications and military security policy: new multi-billion euro expenditures on common defence projects, more joint military operations and the expansion of border security are planned as of 2021.

The promotion of peace and human rights is in danger of being limited and instrumentalised to control migration. The European Commission's draft for the financial framework, dated June 2018, earmarks just €1 bn. instead of the previous €2.3 bn. for nonviolent conflict transformation.

Why the European Union should not become a military power:

The new European defence fund has a proposed budget of €13 bn. for armaments research and the development of new arms systems. In addition, €6.5 bn. are intended for military mobility, especially for the quick redeployment of troops within Europe. Funding the European defence fund out of the common budget of the EU would bid a final farewell to the European Union as a civil peace project.

The future Community budget would invest ten times as much in armaments than in peacebuilding. There is reason to fear that the fund's multi-billion euro subsidisation of the arms industry will result in even more arms exports from Europe.

The European defence fund violates the Treaty of Lisbon. The Treaty prohibits the use of the Community budget of the European Union for the financing of armament projects and military operations.

Why the European Union and its Member States should not provide arms to countries that wage war or disregard human rights:

The next Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union and a new off-budget "European Peace Facility" are designed to fund EU joint military operations and the armament of armed forces in war zones and conflict areas, for example to deter migration. These funding instruments would undermine the European Union's own regulations regarding arms exports.

The European Court of Auditors criticised programs that provide arms to the militaries of partner countries, for example in Mali or Niger, would show no sustainable results. The publishers of the German peace report 2018 warned these programs would pose considerable risks to human rights. They could lead to greater violence rather than curbing it.

Why the European Union should increase support for nonviolent conflict transformation and human rights in the future:

The European Union is one of the world's most important financial supporters of nonviolent conflict transformation and human rights. Many civil society organisations for peace and human rights depend on this support more than ever. The number of violent conflicts has increased in recent years, while human rights and human rights defenders have come under pressure in many countries.

The relevance and effectiveness of the EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace as well as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights were only verified in 2017.

The European Union should not take part in the global armament spiral but pursue its most important goal: 'to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples.'

Contacts

Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden www.friedensdienst.de

Bund für Soziale Verteidigung / Federation for Social Defence www.soziale-verteidigung.de

Church and Peace www.church-and-peace.org

Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst / Forum Civil Peace Service (forumZFD) www.forumZFD.de

Ohne Rüstung Leben www.ohne-ruestung-leben.de

Ökumenische Konsultation Gerechtigkeit und Frieden

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