



## ***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***

**Use EU funds to strengthen civilian, not military instruments, says Church and Peace**  
*European ecumenical network opposes EU paradigm shift from reconciliation and peace project to militarisation*

SCHOEFFENGRUND, Germany, 14 June 2017 – The members of Church and Peace have expressed clear opposition at the network's Annual General Meeting on 9-11 June in Strasbourg to recent security and defence recommendations by the European Commission, says Chairperson Antje Heider-Rottwilm.

On 7 June the Commission announced the launch of a European Defence Fund, proposed a regulation establishing a European Defence Industrial Development Programme to give financial support to the European arms industry and outlined possible future scenarios in a reflection paper on the future of European defence.

Church and Peace members were alarmed that instead of coordinating member state armament plans, and consequently saving considerable sums of money, Commission funds would be taken from the current – civilian – EU budget.

The AGM also noted that two of the three future scenarios proposed in the Commission's reflection paper build the case for moving towards a European Security and Defence Union, based on the rationale that "the rising instability in Europe's neighbourhood as well as globally and new emerging security threats stemming from economic, environmental and technological drivers present important challenges for our security".

The framework for the new European Defence Fund and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme would mean that more than EUR 600 million budgeted for civilian purposes through 2020 would be diverted for military instruments and weapons.

"Church and Peace is very concerned that these proposals would not only be a major shift in the EU budget but would also change the fundamental character of the European Union itself," says Heider-Rottwilm.

The European peace church network has already spoken out in a press release last autumn, similar to other civil society groups active at both national and European levels, against the proposed expansion of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), a decision which is still pending.

"As we pointed out then, the proposed far-reaching paradigm shift would be a further step towards increasingly using funds earmarked for peace work and development aid for other aims such as military capacity building or controlling migration," says Heider-Rottwilm.

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She adds that Church and Peace had underlined at the time that such a move would not be credible if the EU claims to base its foreign policy on good governance and socio-economic development, and would lead to the use of military means to deter people seeking refuge in Europe, instead of addressing the root causes of armed conflict.

Church and Peace members were urging the churches in Europe, as well as the European Parliament, to oppose the “militarisation” of EU funding in the form of increased arms trade and defence capacity building by advocating a coherent and adequately funded politics of peace based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, she says.

“Our members are convinced that a move towards militarisation will not win back the trust in the EU that has been lost but rather will only alienate people even further.”

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The quoted rationale for the development of a Security and Defence Union can be found on page three of the European Commission’s *Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence*, available for downloading at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/reflection-paper-future-european-defence\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/reflection-paper-future-european-defence_en).

2. The Church and Peace 12 October 2016 press release “European peace network Church and Peace warns against extension of EU’s Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace to include military support to third countries” is available for downloading at:

[http://www.church-and-peace.org/fileadmin/downloads/Pressemitteilungen/CP-PR-EU-IcSP-E\\_10-2016.pdf](http://www.church-and-peace.org/fileadmin/downloads/Pressemitteilungen/CP-PR-EU-IcSP-E_10-2016.pdf).

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