



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

Statement on EU budgetary priorities driving militarisation

The European ecumenical network Church and Peace, gathered for its Annual General Meeting and international conference “Justice and Peace shall embrace” (Ps. 85:10) - *Journeying together for reconciliation in a fractured Europe* in Hoddesdon, United Kingdom, 21-24 June 2018, in a region already marked by Brexit and envisioning its further consequences, is deeply concerned about the European Union’s plans to boost spending on military instruments instead of investing in civilian peacebuilding.

As more details of the proposed **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027**¹ are communicated, we observe that the EU is increasingly steering a course away from Europe as a peace project and towards a military alliance. Recent proposals by the European Commission, endorsed by the European Council, on Military Mobility, the European Defence Fund and the European Peace Facility underline the plan to spend around 30 billion euros on defence during 2021-2027.²

In light of the ever-more deadly conflict situations throughout the world, we also reject plans to merge all twelve existing external financing instruments into one and to devote at least 10 percent of this enormous budget of around 89 billion euro in current exchange rates to migration control. While simplification of processes and, to a certain degree, increased flexibility can be argued for, nonetheless, merging a number of core instruments and thus eliminating separate funds for development, civilian peacebuilding, democracy and human rights weakens these essential foundations of a strong civil society and is simply unacceptable.

Joining our voice with the Conference of European Churches (CEC) Assembly at Novi Sad on 8 June 2018³, Church and Peace rejects the new **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)** and calls on the European Parliament and Member States as co-legislators, to ensure that there are three separate instruments - development, human rights and democracy, and civilian peacebuilding - for 2021-2027.

We are committed to fostering peace and reconciliation in Europe and therefore must raise serious questions about the proposal by High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini to establish a **European Peace Facility**.⁴ While we would very much welcome a multi-billion euro fund for civilian peace initiatives, we reject the idea of labelling as an act of ‘peace’ a fund which

1 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/eu-budget-future-2018-may-02_en

2 EUR 6.5 billion on Military Mobility, EUR 13 billion on European Defence Fund via the EU budget, and EUR 10.5 billion off-budget via intergovernmental pooling.

3 https://assembly2018.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GEN_PUB_01_Public_Committee_Draft_Report_APPROVED_EN.pdf

4 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/46285/node/46285_en

will finance joint costs of military transport to out-of-area operations; military training and equipment, including the provision of lethal equipment; and other military action in the field of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). While the EU is planning to invest tens of billions of euro in military responses to regional and global challenges, funds available for civilian approaches will be reduced by more than half of what was available for the budgetary timeframe 2014-2020.⁵ This trend urgently needs to be reversed.

Church and Peace calls on politicians and on the churches in particular to:

- **Engage** in discussion on the future budget priorities of the EU;
- **Insist on** the significance of the EU as a project of peace and reconciliation;
- **Urge** investing resources and people to build peace with justice by taking decisive steps towards global justice, for instance through the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and reconciliation.

Church and Peace Annual General Meeting

Hoddesdon, UK, 22 June 2018

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⁵ The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) budget 2014-2020 was EUR 2,3 billion while there is only a ring-fenced budget for similar activities (reduced scope) of around EUR 1 billion for 2021-2027.