



# 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

### “Together for Europe’s Recovery” – promoting the EU’s civilian peace capacities!

Wethen, 30.6.2020. To mark the start of Germany’s presidency of the Council of the European Union from 1 July to 31 December 2020 Church and Peace, the Europe-wide peace church network, recalls God’s biblical promise about living in safety without weapons, and calls for practical steps to strengthen the role of Europe as a ‘peace power’.

“I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety” (Hos 2:18) This promise also applies to “mak[ing] Europe stronger again”, the goal that Germany has set itself for the Council presidency in its programme entitled “Together for Europe’s recovery”.<sup>1</sup>

Together Church and Peace members and friends across Europe have for decades worked for peace, reconciliation, refugees and climate justice. The coronavirus pandemic has made it clear to all of us:

Crises hit us all – worldwide.

Crises hit us all – but the people on the margins (also of Europe) are hardest hit.

Crises hit us all – and common security cannot be guaranteed with weapons.

The German Council presidency bears a great responsibility for ensuring that everything is done to safeguard, in the coming years, the livelihoods and survival of future generations and the whole earth.

In view of the fact that the priorities of the EU’s next Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027) have to be decided before the end of 2020, it is urgent to strengthen civilian peace capacities.

Specifically:

- People in our network who are involved Europe-wide in nonviolent conflict resolution expect the German Foreign Minister not just to act on his intention, announced on November 2019, “to found a *European competence centre for civilian crisis management* that strengthens Europe’s role as a peace power”,<sup>2</sup> but also to advocate strongly for boosting the EU’s civilian peace missions.
- People in our network therefore expect Germany to turn *civilian crisis prevention and promoting peace* into a *focal theme* and ensure the implementation of the European Parliament’s resolution on building EU capacity on conflict prevention and mediation,<sup>3</sup> and its resolution on implementation of the Council Common Position<sup>4</sup> defining rules to control the export of military technology and equipment.
- People in our network who live in the *countries of former Yugoslavia* and work for reconciliation urgently hope that there will finally be *visas for all* – as a step towards all the countries in the region being able to gain accession to the EU.
- People in our network who are committed to the search and rescue of refugees expect that the *human right to rescue from distress at sea* will finally take effect.
- People in our network who support refugees in refugee camps on the EU’s external borders, such as in Greece and the western Balkans, expect that finally the *human right to decent accommodation* and a *just asylum procedure* will apply for all refugees.
- People in our network who engage with the madness of *arms production and exports* expect to see drastic cuts in the funds planned for the European Defence Fund and, instead, a significant rise in the financial resources for civilian crisis prevention and peace-building, in view of the above-mentioned challenges.

1 <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/issues/europe/programm-ratspraesidentschaft-1763978>

2 <https://www.rnd.de/politik/aussenminister-heiko-maas-deutschland-muss-liefern-QEV470Q6GFA5TCLZHH25VH2I5I.html>

3 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0158\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0158_EN.html)

4 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0451\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0451_EN.html)