



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 security policy decisions of the European Union during the German Council EU Presidency

With the end of the German EU Council Presidency in the second half of 2020, a new era of the European Union has begun, both in relation to Brexit and with the new budget phase of the Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027).ⁱ On this occasion, the Board of the European ecumenical peace church network Church and Peace evaluates some of the currently available arms and security policy decisions.

In a broad alliance of churches and civil society in various European countries and at the level of the European Union (EU), we have repeatedlyⁱⁱ addressed the **EU's new security and defence strategy**, especially since 2016, and warned of a threat to the **European peace project** through a “creeping militarisation of the EU”.

“In a world marked by injustice and violence, security - the central keyword of the EU - is not achieved through more weapons, but through a decisive commitment to justice and civilian conflict prevention and management,ⁱⁱⁱ said Church and Peace in December 2018 in view of the vote on the European Defence Fund. And at the beginning of the German Council Presidency, in which the future Multiannual Financial Framework was to be decided, we referred to the biblical promise: “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'.^{iv}

As a network whose members include people and peace organisations in the UK, we regret **Brexit**, which has now been cemented by treaty. We are concerned about the danger that the Northern Ireland conflict, which has been painstakingly contained, will erupt again. We believe it is urgently necessary to involve the European Parliament in all the shaping and implementation of the treaty (Trade and Cooperation Agreement^v). This is the only way to guarantee the democratic legitimacy of relations between the EU and the United Kingdom.

Together with many churches and organisations across Europe, Church and Peace has repeatedly warned against endangering the European peace project by investing in military options in view of the negotiations on the **Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027)**^{vi} and instead has called for strengthening civilian instruments.^{vii}

It is a serious paradigm shift that with the **European Defence Fund (EDF)**^{viii}, which was adopted in 2017 and finances defence research and production, a budget for military purposes has been anchored in the EU budget for the first time. Even if the sum of €13.5 billion planned by the Commission for the EDF and €6 billion for military mobility has now been cut to a total of €8.5

billion^{ix} and armed drones have been excluded, this decision will lead to further arms production and more exports, especially since control by the European Parliament has been prevented.^x

We regret that, despite all warnings, budget instruments that were previously delimited and thus reliably available, have been merged. Within the framework of the now newly created **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)**, there is thus a risk of cross-sectoral use of funds, especially since “migration control” will be a cross-cutting issue.

This also includes the **Instrument for Stability and Peace**, which has been very effective in financing, inter alia, crisis prevention, mediation and measures against gender-based violence.^{xi} It is all the more disappointing that it has been cut from €2.3 billion to less than €0.9 billion. It also continues to include equipping and capacity building of “partner armies” in third countries with non-lethal technology and services up to a maximum of €270 million. We have repeatedly criticised this expansion since 2016.^{xii} It has also not yet been clarified whether the European Parliament has a control function over these funds.

Again and again we have also criticised the decisions of the European Council to establish a **European Peace Facility**.^{xiii} Even though the €10.5 billion earmarked for it has since been reduced to €5 billion, the title is absurd, as it is about financing military measures.^{xiv}

It seems reasonable to pool the costs of joint military actions in the area of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in order to prevent individual actions and to commit to a UN mandate as well as to jointly co-finance UN peacekeeping actions. However, it is planned to go beyond the existing African Union peacekeeping missions (African Peace Facility) to strengthen the military and defence capacities of third countries worldwide - through training, weapons and ammunition! The previous mechanism required an agreement with the African Union. Now it is to be feared that bilateral agreements will be made, especially under the guiding interest of border security and migration control.^{xv}

We welcome the fact that the Netherlands, Sweden and Luxembourg have succeeded in establishing the eight criteria of the **Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment**^{xvi} under the Peace Facility.

This makes it all the more urgent that the member states finally implement the Common Position in restrictive national arms control laws. It is also necessary that a legally binding restrictive Regulation, including sanctions, be adopted at the European level, especially since the European Defence Fund means that the EU will now produce armaments itself and thus also export them.

It is scandalous that this Council Presidency has also failed to adopt a humane and solidarity-based **asylum and migration policy**. In view of the humanitarian dramas outside and inside the EU, as well as at its borders, as witnessed by committed members of Church and Peace there, the priority given to issues such as overcoming the COVID-19 crisis and Brexit cannot be used as legitimisation.

Obviously, there is still a clear preponderance with regard to the guiding interest of **border security and migration control** (see above). This includes that, despite all the scandals, the staff of FRONTEX is to be increased from 1,000 to 10,000 border guards by 2027 and a total of €22.7 billion is to be spent on “migration and border management”.

Against this background, we underline that the EU continues to keep urgently needed **funds for development and civilian tasks**, such as for development and neighbourhood policy,

humanitarian aid, foreign policy, human rights and democracy promotion, stability and peace, within the now earmarked amount of approximately €98 billion.

We welcome the fact that the Council of the European Union has adopted **Council Conclusions on EU Peace Mediation** and that it “reaffirms its support for peace mediation as a key tool of conflict prevention and resolution and peace-building under the Common Foreign and Security policy when addressing risks to peace”. Further, we welcome the need for its peace efforts “to take into account the effects of climate change on peace and security” and the fact that “climate-related risks must therefore be consistently considered in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building strategies”.^{xvii}

We welcome the **European External Action Service (EEAS) concept on EU peace mediation** of 2 December 2020, which provides for increased financial support including close cooperation with civil society/NGOs in the field of mediation.^{xviii}

We call on EU citizens, churches and organisations in Europe to continue to insist that the EU develops its existing competences in areas such as peace, justice, human rights and sustainability, thereby strengthening **Europe as a peace project**, instead of tying up human and financial resources in armament and military action.

Church and Peace Board, 25. February 2021

- i Infographic – Multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 and Next Generation EU (as of 8 February 2021), <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/mff2021-2027-ngeu-final>
- ii European Union (2016): *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy*, http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf
- iii Church and Peace press release (12 December 2018): *Vote of the European Parliament on the Defence Fund: Parliament's majority focuses on arms investment instead of strengthening civilian conflict management*, <https://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/PM-EP-Defence-Fund-12122018.pdf>
- iv Church and Peace press release (30 June 2020): *"Together for Europe's Recovery" – promoting the EU's civilian peace capacities!*, <https://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/PR-German-Presidency-of-Council-of-EU-30062020.pdf>
- v European Commission (24 December 2020): *Questions & Answers: EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement*, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_2532
- vi Council of Europe press release (10 November 2020): *Next multiannual financial framework and recovery package: Council presidency reaches political agreement with the European Parliament*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/11/10/next-multiannual-financial-framework-and-recovery-package-council-presidency-reaches-political-agreement-with-the-european-parliament/pdf>; Council of the European Union press release (17 December 2020): *Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and Next Generation EU (Commitments, in 2018 prices)*, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/47567/mff-2021-2027_rev.pdf
- vii Church and Peace (22 June 2018): *Statement on EU budgetary priorities driving militarisation*, https://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Statement-to-EU-MFF_0618.pdf
- viii Council of the European Union (21 December 2021): *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Fund*, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14285-2020-INIT/en/pdf>
- ix European Network Against Arms Trade - ENAAT (1 October 2020): *Who gets most of EU funding for military research and development?*, http://enaat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/EUdefFd_analysis_Flyer_2020_EN.pdf
- x All EU states (excluding the UK) together spent 'only' about €1.6 billion on defence research in 2018; see: Joint Conference Church and Development - GKKE (2021): *Report on Arms Export 2020*, p. 83, <https://www.gkke.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/GKKE-69-REB.pdf>
- xi European Commission, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), *Map of all IcSP-funded projects*, <https://icspmap.eu/>
- xii Church and peace press release (12 October 2016): *Church and Peace warns against extension of EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) to include military support to third countries*, https://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/CP-PR-EU-IcSP-E_10-2016.pdf
- xiii Most recently, together with 40 European organisations: see Joint Civil Society Statement (November 2020): *European 'Peace' Facility: Causing harm or bringing peace?*, <https://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Peace-Facility-NGO-Statement-18-Nov-2020.pdf>
- xiv Council of Europe (18 December 2020): *Council reaches a political agreement on the European Peace Facility*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/12/18/council-reaches-a-political-agreement-on-the-european-peace-facility/>
- xv See also: International Crisis Group, Africa Report N°297 (2021): *How to spend it: New EU Funding for African Peace and Security*, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/african-union-regional-bodies/297-how-spend-it-new-eu-funding-african-peace-and-security>
- xvi *Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008E0944&from=EN>
- xvii Council of the European Union (7 December 2020): *Council Conclusions on EU Peace Mediation*, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13573-2020-INIT/en/pdf>
- xviii Working document of the European External Action Service: *Concept on EU Peace Mediation, EEAS (2020) 1336* (as of 2 December 2020), https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eeas_20201336_working_document_on_concept_on_eu_peace_mediation.pdf