



New European Commission prioritises competition and security instead of reconciliation and peace!

**Church and Peace: Call to Members of the European Parliament:
Use the hearing in the European Parliament from 4 to 12 November 2024
as an opportunity to correct the EU's course**

Wethen, 30.10.2024 In the job descriptions of the future European Commissioners, "reconciliation" and "peace" must be named as political guiding principles', according to the European peace church network Church and Peace. We call on the Members of the European Parliament to question the candidates in the hearings from 4 to 12 November on their relevant competences and to request the revision of the dossiers.¹

The EU's strategic agenda for the next five years, the political guidelines for the new European Commission and the job descriptions for the commissioners-designate are dominated by two priorities: 1) competitiveness and 2) security and defence².

'Concrete proposals for the promotion of peace are missing in all texts setting the EU's strategic priorities for the next five years,' stated the participants at the European Conference of Church and Peace from 24 to 27 October 2014 in Brussels.

This fundamentally contradicts the founding idea and the European Constitutional Treaty (see Art. 3.1 TEU and Art. 21(2)c)³, especially as the EU, as a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, should stand for a comprehensive understanding of security and peace. Where a defence-focused understanding of security is combined with industrial competitiveness⁴, problematic consequences are inevitable.

On the one hand, this means that massive arms build-up ties up resources that are urgently needed to combat the causes of conflict and instead creates new centres of conflict. For example, the EU has earmarked around EUR 12 billion for the European Defence Fund and other defence-related financial aid for the years 2021-2027. The total defence spending of all EU member states together reached a record level of EUR 270 billion in 2023 alone, compared to EUR 240 billion in 2022.

At the same time, funding provided for important areas such as development or humanitarian aid is being cut. The draft budget proposal for the years 2025-2027, which is currently being negotiated, provides for a reduction in development spending of EUR 2 billion, with funding

¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20240930IPR24372/european-parliament-hearings-with-commissioners-designate-to-start-on-4-november>

² https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/towards-new-commission-2024-2029/commissioners-designate-2024-2029_en

³ 'The Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples.'
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/3b537594-9264-4249-a912-5b102b7b49a3_en?filename=Mission%20letter%20-%20VIRKKUNEN.pdf



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for the least developed countries to be cut by an average of 35% in the period 2025-2027 compared to the amounts allocated for 2021-2024.

Another problematic consequence of the linkage is that the competitiveness of the defence industry is to be improved and the obstacles that stand in its way – such as arms control mechanisms – are to be removed. Military security and defence are sensitive areas with a risk of misuse – whether by states or companies. Leaving armaments to unregulated market mechanisms is irresponsible, especially when considering military technologies such as autonomous weapons, drones, energy weapons or space defence capabilities.

Against this background, Church and Peace supports the establishment of a **parliamentary intergroup on peace** and the development of a **European Peace Strategy** for the entire EU and its institutions to promote human security and peace. It could help to strengthen the EU's civilian peacebuilding activities and build its capacity in the areas of preventive diplomacy, mediation and reconciliation – as well as addressing the 'forgotten' or 'invisible' conflicts and their humanitarian impacts.

Church and Peace therefore recommends that the members of the network and all committed individuals call on the Members of the European Parliament to question **the commissioners-designate at the hearings from 4 to 12 November** about their respective visions and specific approaches to a sustainable global peace strategy for the EU. The new European Commission and its priorities will play a decisive role in shaping action over the next five years – a period that could be crucial for decades to come!

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