

Brussels, 8 March 2017

To Donald TUSK, President of the European Council

To the Heads of States and Governments of the 28 EU Member States

To Jean-Claude JUNCKER, President of the European Commission

**OPEN LETTER TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL:**

**THE EU SHOULD LEAD THE WAY TOWARDS THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS, RATHER THAN CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW ARMS RACE WHICH MAINLY BENEFITS THE ARMS INDUSTRY**

Dear President Tusk, Heads of States and Governments and President Juncker,

You are about to discuss further the proposals under the Implementation Plan for Security and Defence of the EU Global Strategy and the EU Defence Action Plan. A summary of the arms-related proposals is:

- **€90 million** to be dedicated to military research from 2017 to 2019 under the Preparatory Action (PA) and at least **€3'500 million** for a full military research programme from 2021 to 2027;
- a **€5'000 million** capability window for the development and acquisition of military equipment. The EU budget could cover the administrative costs and even contribute to this 'pot' of national contributions;
- to divert part of the EU budget for "*capacity building in support of security and development*", in other words **'train & equip' the military of third countries with EU development funds** (IcSP funding);
- to **start or increase access to several EU budget lines by the arms industry** from 2017. The lines include **regional funds, structural funds, COSME, Erasmus + ...**;
- a suggestion that **part of the EIB and EFSI funds be diverted to the arms industry for military applications**, putting into question the current general principles of EIB and EFSI and their restricted sectors.

These proposals are largely the **result of long-term discreet lobbying by the arms industry**, which is looking for **new opportunities in the EU budget** to add to national funds they already benefit from. But those with alternative views are not properly consulted or listened to.

Even though some arms companies are still partially owned by Member States, they all behave as economic actors wanting to export their products and make profits. However **arms sales are not a 'normal business'**, and proposals aimed at **boosting the arms industry competitiveness and its capacity to export are not what many EU citizens would want to see:**

- Those seeking greater security in the current international climate are very well aware that **increasing arms sales and military expenditure is not a good way forward**. This is shown by EU-wide polls and our [online petition against the PA](#).
- **Jobs and growth are not a justification:** these objectives could more easily be met by investing in crucial sustainable development projects which comply with the UN Climate Agreement and Europe 2020 commitments. Concrete proposals exist for the conversion of arms-related jobs to environmentally sustainable ones.
- **These proposals do not represent any savings** as this expenditure is meant to be in addition to, not instead of, national military spending. Separately, NATO is also asking several EU states to increase the latter.

Last but not least, many military experts consider that **spending more is not necessary**. Combined EU Member State military spending is second in the world after the United States, far more than Russia and still more than China. According to these experts **the problem lies in the lack of political will, cooperation and common**

**strategy between Member States in military and security matters.** Giving more money to the arms industry without resolving first these serious shortcomings will only result in further waste of public money.

**In conclusion, we do not believe these proposals will serve the EU's general interest, but rather that they are another subsidy to the arms industry. The latter will then sell and transfer abroad many of the technologies developed with public money, thus exacerbating a global arms race which in turn negatively impacts conflicts.**

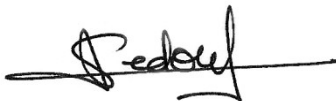
There is no question that security today is a major challenge and that the EU has a critical role to play in addressing it. But threats to security have many causes and the solutions that the EU proposes must be clearly based on the Treaties and be innovative and courageous, rather than repeating the mistakes of the past.

For decades we have been told that more weapons and military spending should lead to more peace through deterrence. **According to the SIPRI figures, military spending worldwide reached \$1'760 Billion in 2015, with a cumulative amount of \$38'275 Billion (in 2014 USD) since 1988. If arms and military responses worked, then the world should have been a peaceful place for a long time.**

**The European Network Against Arms Trade calls you to uphold on the founding mission of the EU, 60 years after its creation, by:**

- ✓ **reconsidering these proposals and ending the support for arms industry interests**
- ✓ **seriously supporting and funding peaceful and sustainable ways of resolving and preventing conflicts, including tackling their root-causes, rather than diverting the EU budget to the arms industry**
- ✓ **facilitating a genuine public debate with full transparency of the decision-making process so that alternative options are considered and the interests of EU citizens prevails.**

Yours sincerely,



Laëtitia Sédou  
EU Programme Officer

ENAAT members:

Agir pour la Paix, *Belgium*

BUKO-Campaign: Stop the Arms Trade, *Germany*

Campaign Against Arms Trade, *United Kingdom*

Centre Delàs for Peace Studies, *Spain*

Committee of 100 in Finland, *Finland*

Gruppe für eine Schweiz ohne Armee (GsoA), *Switzerland*

Human Rights Institute, *Slovakia*

International Peace Bureau, *Switzerland*

Nesehnuti, *Czech Republic*

Norwegian Peace Association, *Norway*

Observatoire des armements, *France*

Rete Italiana per il Disarmo, *Italy*

Peace Union of Finland, *Finland*

Stop Wapenhandel, *the Netherlands*

Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society (SPAS), *Sweden*

Vredesactie, *Belgium*

War Resisters' International, *United Kingdom*

**“the world is over-armed and peace is underfunded” Ban-Ki-Moon, former UN Secretary General**

**“I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary;  
the evil it does is permanent” Mahatma Gandhi**