

Country report Belgium 2008

Vredesactie – Netwerk Vlaanderen / European Network Against Arms Trade

Running campaigns and future developments in Flanders (Flemish part of Belgium):

A. investments in the arms industry

- My money. Clear Conscience? Coalition of movement for sustainable investment Netwerk Vlaanderen and peace movements Vredesactie – FOE – Vrede

Results after five years of campaigning:

- All targeted banks have restrictions on investments in arms producers
 - Legislation against investments in cluster munitions and landmines
 - EU resolution calling on all member states to prohibit these investments
 - Dublin treaty: chance for other countries to put pressure on investors and to force similar legislation in their country.
- Stage of campaign now: follow up of domino effect worldwide

Campaigns Spain BBVA / Justitia y pau, campaign Dutch pension funds

Key to success: Public pressure!

= Naming and shaming, Adbusting, Ace bank, Website, rating, symbolic actions, etc

www.mymoneyclearconscience.be

www.banksecrets.be

www.ace-bank.eu

B. Arms industry and export

Belgian context very specific:

Flanders: high tech, mainly civil (20 percent of export), French part (small arms)

Tensions between two parts of the country, so any controversy leads to political crises. Belgian solution: split up! This leads to schizophrenic situations, e.g. 2006: Massive deliveries from Wallonia to S-A from French part. Nobody talks about this. 2007: big controversy in Flanders about delivery of parts to BAE systems, to be integrated in vehicles for S-A.

Figures:

Exports Flanders + 35 percent 2007. Belgium nr 7 Europe, nr 17 worldwide.

Belgium first country to integrate EU code of conduct in law (2003) = weakening of existing law.

Progress on transparency: amount, products, countries, end destination. Every six months and every year ministry of Economy reports to parliament + monthly reports on public website.

Discussion about regional translation of this (still) national law: greens have radical proposal, but has no support from other parties.

Governmental guideline (1999) against funding of research with possible military spin-off is being challenged by responsible minister. Research shows that this kind of support has no positive economic impact: the recent publishing of this report provoked fierce reactions from politicians and arms industry.

[Www.vredesactie.be](http://www.vredesactie.be)

C. NATO campaign

NATO Game Over!

Last years: broaden from nuclear arms to NATO and its intervention logics.
Several civil inspections / mass trespasses of military bases

April 2009: 60th anniversary of NATO! Top in Kehl / Strasbourg

Actions up until now:

- Several mass trespasses in headquarters NATO bases in Belgium
- last one = Big international action in march 2008 at NATO headquarter, 700 people trying to enter the base, 50 succeeded, 400 arrests
- Mass trespass in military base in Sevilla, mai 2008.

In the running:

- Mobilisation for action camp in Büchel (trespass of military base with American nuclear bombs), Germany in august 2008
- International day of action 'war start from Europe', 14-15 november 2008 (see below)
- New mass trespass march in NATO HQ in Brussels, (in the forerun of the NATO top in Strasbourg, Germany, april 2009) march/april 2009
- Mobilisation of Belgian activists to join action camp in Strasbourg.

Call for groups who may take on this topic, who have bases with link to NATO.

Call for joining the International action 14-15 november: Wars start from Europe. Let's stop wars from Europe is one of the motto of this movement which points out the involvement of the european states in the preparatives of war, be it

- hosting interventionist military installations,
- handing over the use of civil harbours and airports to the military deployment,
- or increasing the public budget for the military.

Vredesactie

[Www.vredesactie.be](http://www.vredesactie.be) and www.bomspotting.be

contact inez@vredesactie.be

mobile 0032 498 68 29 40

