



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

€13 billion for the arms industry - Church and Peace protests against the decision of the majority of the European Parliament on Maundy Thursday

Diemelstadt-Wethen, Easter 2019. With disappointment and protest, the European peace church network Church and Peace is reacting to the decision of the European Parliament on Maundy Thursday, 18 April, to adopt the regulation for the *European Defence Fund*, thus paving the way for *€13 billion to be earmarked for research and development of military equipment in the coming Multiannual Financial Framework (2021 - 2027)*. For the first time, the EU will become the financier of the European defence industry with funds from the common budget that will not be available for civilian tasks. This sum will also be supplemented by €6.5 billion for 'military mobility'. There are no plans to make corresponding savings on national defence budgets. The Defence Fund Regulation was adopted on the last day of the legislative period by 328 votes to 231.

In the parliamentary debates and negotiations between Parliament, the Commission and the Council over the last few months, the GREENS/EFA initiative has succeeded in excluding autonomous killer drones from eligible projects. However, it still includes armed drones and weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons. The Greens (GREENS/EFA), the Left (GUE/NGL) and parts of the Social Democrats (S&D) have tried in vain to prevent further unacceptable aspects of the decision. This includes the fact that Parliament will not have access to the allocation and control of funds and to the export of arms technology to countries outside the EU. It will not be able to check whether, for example, the *Common Position 2008/944/CFSP*, which since 2008 has stipulated that no arms may be exported to crisis areas or warring countries, is being violated.

Together with many civil society groups, churches and organisations across Europe, Church and Peace has repeatedly made public and protested against the threat of billions being invested in the arms industry, especially as the funds for civil violence prevention and transformation are to be reduced to just €1 billion (from €2.3 billion to date).

The negotiations on this regulation have been concluded, but the newly elected European Parliament will have to decide in autumn 2019 on the overall Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027!

On these Easter days, churches all over the world remind us that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ bear witness: non-violence and justice are not only a utopia, but the way to peace for the whole earth.

That is why Church and Peace, together with more than one hundred organisations and church groups, is calling for this in view of the European elections:

Save the European Peace Project!

Stand up for a European Union that advocates peace and human rights unconditionally.

Campaign for a European Union that adheres to the European peace project instead of becoming a military power.

Do not let the European Union provide arms to states that wage war or violate human rights to ward off refugees and migration.

Increase the funds of the European Union for the promotion of non-violent conflict transformation and human rights.

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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2019-0430+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>
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<https://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Position-Checklist-EP2019.pdf>

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