

EUROPEAN GROUPS SUPPORT GLOBAL CAMPAIGN ON MILITARY SPENDING



Quaker
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AGIR
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VREDESACTIE



"Beati i costruttori di pace"



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Belgische Coalitie
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**Peace Union
of Finland** 

“The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded.” – Ban Ki-moon

Statement on the Global Day Against Military Spending (GDAMS), 13 April 2015, part of the Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS). The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of military spending and alternatives.

Across the EU, governments spend a total of 255 Billion euro on the military. This is grossly excessive and contributes to insecurity for many people around the world.

We call on EU Member States, the European Commission, and the European Parliament to:

- reduce their reliance on military responses to security challenges, which are discredited
- invest in peacebuilding, development, curbing climate change or public services.

The voices of citizens are often distant from political decisions to invest in militarism rather than peace. This applies particularly at the European level where governments and some European Union (EU) institutions prioritise military strategies in situations where further violence is counter-productive. These decisions are often influenced by lobbyists working for the arms trade, and governments with large arms manufacturers operating in their country*.

There are complex reasons for the occurrence and re-occurrence of violence in some parts of the world. We encourage political leaders not to accept simple military solutions. They should demand rigorous analysis of conflicts on which to base their decisions.

In June 2015 European governments will meet to review the security and defence priorities that they have set for the EU. These include:

- Air-to-air refuelling to support air strikes
- Development of armed drones by the EU Defence Agency
- Economic support for the arms trade
- Militaristic and confrontational approaches to maritime and cyber security

A safer world can be built by replacing priorities that involve military spending with funding for strategies that build peace and meet social and environmental need. We call on European governments and EU institutions to:

1. Reduce military spending and the use of counter-productive military strategies to address security issues. For example, the International Peace Bureau (Coordinator of the GCOMS) has called for annual reallocations of at least 10 per cent from military budgets of all states.
2. Increase funding for peace, to prevent violence and address human insecurity. Nonviolent methods are abundant, far less expensive, more effective and more consistent with the stated values of the European Union. Methods range from civilian peacemakers and civil peace services who engage directly in conflicts, to peace education that equips people with nonviolent communication and critical thinking skills, which may help with resisting far-right nationalism and identity conflicts. We acknowledge that positive initiatives are also made at the European level. We praise the EU for investment in peacebuilding and mediation processes in parts of the world affected by conflict. However, to give peace a real chance, we must give peace a real budget.

3. Eliminate weapons, weapon materials, and weapon delivery systems, in order to enhance European peace and security, and the survival of humanity. We call for an end to government support for the European arms trade, including European arms fairs such as DSEI (London, September 2015) and Eurosatory (Paris, June 2016). We are particularly opposed to government spending on weapons of mass destruction, notably by the UK and France, and to the presence of US nuclear weapons in Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. We further oppose recent calls for so called 'tactical' nuclear weapons to be deployed in Eastern Europe.
4. Challenge those who seek to promote 'new Cold War' and 'global Jihadism' narratives, often for their own purposes. These narratives help violent extremists provoke the responding violence and grievances they desire. The crises in Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, and elsewhere require significant humanitarian and political efforts to protect people and build a sustainable peace. We therefore welcome the reluctance of EU states to send arms into violent conflicts in Ukraine.
5. Consider alternatives to military capacity building in conflict-affected countries. The almost complete exclusion of women from EU operations that seek to support military, police, and justice reform reinforces gender roles that associate masculinity with power, violence, and control. Instead European Union justice and security sector reform programmes should involve local civil society, including women and young people in needs assessments, planning and delivery phases.
6. We encourage EU Member States and institutions to use their leverage to improve the lives of the world's most economically disadvantaged people during important sustainable development and climate change negotiations taking place throughout 2015. The structural violence of increasing economic inequality inside and outside of the EU is a causal factor that must be addressed. We call for peacebuilding and disarmament to be prominently articulated within the UN Sustainable Development Goals to be agreed in September 2015. In particular, we encourage the needs of fragile and conflict-affected countries to be included within the Financing for Development negotiations. We further call for a clear objective to end irresponsible arms flows. We also look forward to governments' proactive commitment to a legally binding, fair and ambitious climate change agreement at the Conference of Parties (COP 21) in Paris. We hope that by reducing military spending, governments will increase their planned contributions to the Green Climate Fund.

We hope to involve even more European Union citizens in an open and robust debate on the counter-productive results of military expenditure. We hope to continue to find new partners to work with in the Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS), and to see many groups at the GCOMS conference in Berlin in September 2016.

This statement is supported by:

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Notes:

The next Global Day against Military Spending (GDAMS) is 13 April 2015. It is the fifth annual GDAMS. For more information about GDAMS, which is part of the Global Campaign on Military Spending, visit www.demilitarize.org

Both campaigns are coordinated by the International Peace Bureau - www.ipb.org

Global military spending is 1.6 trillion euro per annum - [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](http://www.sipri.org).

Analysis released by SIPRI on 13 April 2015 indicates that some Nordic countries and countries in Central Europe will increase military spending during 2015. In 2014, Poland and Malta had the highest percentage increases in military spending by any EU Member State. Greece and Portugal had the largest percentage decreases. The 2015 SIPRI data also showed that the EU Member State spending most on the military is France, followed by the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy.

The global economic impact of violence is 9.3 trillion euro (11.3% of global GDP) - [Institute of Economics and Peace](http://www.economicandpeace.org)

*We note that continued violence in the Middle East has benefited arms dealers in Europe, Russia and the US. Data released by the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](http://www.sipri.org) on 16 March 2015, has shown the 71 per cent increase in arms sales to the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (from 2005-2009 to 2010-14).

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