

## Over 700 researchers call on colleagues to speak out against EU military research programme

Today a coalition of science and peace organisations has launched the European initiative *Researchers for Peace*. Over 700 scientists and academics, most from 19 EU countries, have signed an online statement which calls on the EU to stop funding military research. They invite their colleagues in the research community to add their support.

The EU is budgeting billions of euros for military research and the development of weapons. On Thursday 28th EU member states will meet in Brussels to discuss defence issues and migration. The European Defence Fund, which would pour 13 billion euros into military research and development, tops the agenda.

The 700 researchers warn of the consequences of an R&D programme for new arms technology. *"The establishment of an EU military research programme points towards an unprecedented acceleration in the militarisation of the EU"* says **Dr Stuart Parkinson, Executive Director of Scientists for Global Responsibility**. *"Investing EU funds in military research will not only divert resources from more peaceful areas, but is also likely to fuel arms races, undermining security in Europe or elsewhere"*.

### Making choices

The researchers fear that the military R&D programme will divert funding from other research areas. *"Europe has a long tradition of scientific innovation and EU research programmes have shown to be a powerful policy tool. But Europe has to make choices on what kind of research to fund. Each euro can only be spent once"* says **Jordi Rufanges Coordinator and Researcher the Spanish research institute Centre Delas**. *"The EU should continue to focus on investment in civilian research areas that improve our quality of life, helping to solve health and environmental problems, and contributing to stability and equality in society."*

*"Instead of providing funding for new military technologies, the EU should finance innovative research which helps to tackle the root causes of conflict and contributes to the peaceful resolution of conflict"*, **Rufanges** continues.

### Killer robots

The military technologies under development will shape the wars of the future. The European Union has already started developing autonomous systems under the 'Preparatory Action on Defence Research'.

Despite warnings from both the [scientific community](#) and the [European Parliament](#), the decisions to develop autonomous military systems have been taken without any public debate. The European Union risks exacerbating a global arms race in robotic weapons and drones. And what's more, there's a risk that this could lead to an increase in arms exports to repressive regimes and fuel conflict. Already EU-made weapons are facilitating violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in a number of conflict zones.

**Dr Parkinson** adds *"These investments in military R&D will not increase peace and security. On the contrary, they will only worsen global tensions. In the meantime, scientific research which might actually contribute to preventing violent conflict is being neglected."*

**Media Contact:** Laëtitia Sédou, EU programme Officer at ENAAT, +32.496.15.83.91, [laetitia@enaat.org](mailto:laetitia@enaat.org)

---

### **About Researchers for Peace**

Researchers for Peace is a campaign run by the European Network Against Arms Trade, International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility, International Peace Bureau, Vredesactie (Belgium), Scientists for Global Responsibility (UK), Centre Delàs d'Estudis per la Pau (Spain), Rete Italiana per il Disarmo (Italy), and Sciences Citoyennes (France).

The sign-on statement for researchers – which calls on the European Union to stop funding military research – together with a current list of signatories can be viewed at: [www.researchersforpeace.eu](http://www.researchersforpeace.eu)

We invite other researchers to add their name to the statement.

---

### **Background on the EU funding for military research and development**

In late 2016 the European Commission launched its plans for a European Defence Fund. This fund has developed from number of proposals, some of which are already underway but most have not yet been approved.

At the time of writing, the European Defence Fund comprises the following elements:

- The Pilot Project and the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) are the first programmes which are already being implemented. Both are military research programmes. The Preparatory Action serves as a precursor to the Research segment of the European Defence Fund. The proposed budget for this Research segment is 4.1 billion euros for the period 2021 to 2027 inclusive.
  - In addition, in June 2017, the European Commission proposed a European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP). The final vote on the EDIDP will take place on 3rd July. The aim of the EDIDP is to develop new weapon systems and related military technologies, which it is intended will be procured by Member States. Again this programme is a pilot, with a budget for 2019-2020 of 0.5 billion euros in EU funds, with additional contributions expected from Member States. For 2021-2027, the aim is to have a Development segment within the European Defence Fund with a budget of 8.9 billion euros.
  - The proposed budgets for both the research and development segments of the European Defence Fund are still to be approved by the European Parliament and the Member States.
- 

### **Further reading**

Some articles, reports and official information about the state of play of the EU military research programmes:

An overview of the EU military research plans by Scientists for Global Responsibility:

<http://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/eu-moves-military-science-and-technology>

A Q&A by the European Network Against Arms Trade (ENAAT) on the European Defence Fund:

<http://enaat.org/eu-defence-fund>

A report by the Belgian peace organisation Vredesactie about how the European Defence Fund was influenced by the defence industry: [http://istopthearmstrade.eu/en/mapping-arms-trade?securing\\_profits](http://istopthearmstrade.eu/en/mapping-arms-trade?securing_profits)

An article published in *Nature* on the shift in focus by the EU towards funding of military research:

<https://www.nature.com/news/peaceful-european-union-starts-to-fund-military-research-1.21212>

Factsheet by the Dutch organisation Stop Wapenhandel on the European Defence Action Plan:

<http://www.stopwapenhandel.org/EUMoney>

An overview of official documents related to the European Defence Fund:

- [The proposal for a European Defence Fund](#)
- [The European Defence Action Plan](#)
- [The report published by the Group of Personalities on Defence Research](#)

[ENDS]