

PRESS RELEASE

The European Defence Fund will merely benefit the industry and trigger arms race in autonomous weapons, says ENAAT

Brussels, 13 June 2018 Today the European Commission released its [proposals for the Security and Defence heading under the next EU long-term budget](#). They confirm an unprecedented funding level for security and military priorities, **with a Defence Fund jumping by 2200%**. *“The European Defence Fund will subsidize private actors for the Research & Development of controversial weaponry, which will then be used or exported according to industrial or strategic national interests”*, **warns the European Network Against Arms Trade**.

The [next EU long-term budget](#), to run from 2021 to 2027, will dedicate 2 out of 6 policy headings¹ to security, military, migration and border management issues. Together those 2 headings would benefit from the largest budget increase compared to other policies: respectively 180% and 260% rises for security and for migration & border management, and an astonishing 2200% jump for the European Defence Fund from €0.59 to €13 billion. In 2027, the EU will have spent more for military research than for humanitarian aid...

“The next long-term budget confirms the EU paradigm shift towards hard security and military answers to complex problems, as well as the over-influence of the military-industrial complex on EU policy developments: the same companies that are advising the EU will then be the main beneficiaries of this funding” **says Laëtitia Sédou, EU Programme Officer for ENAAT**.

The European Defence Fund will focus in particular on unmanned military technology like armed drones, and could also support the development of fully autonomous weapons, including lethal ones (killer robots): The French and German governments want the European military drone MALE to be further developed under the Defence Fund. The [Preparatory Action for Defence Research](#)² dedicates a third of its budget to unmanned systems for maritime surveillance. And [EU Member States rejected any binding limitation to the development of fully autonomous weapons in the European Defence Industrial Development Programme](#)².

Francesco Vignarca, coordinator of the Italian Disarmament Network, alerts: *“The use of armed drones, and of fully autonomous weapons in the near future, is changing the face of war and challenging international law. It is of particular concern that Europe puts the development of such problematic technology in the hands of a military industry which has profit as its ultimate goal.”*

Another main objective of the European Defence Fund is to boost the global competitiveness of the military industry. And given that national markets are already too small to absorb European over-production and provide higher profitability, the arms industry will put an even greater emphasis on exports, including of EU-funded new military technology as a crucial competitive edge.

“Those developments will not lead to peace and security, but will only increase the arms industry profits and exacerbate the global arms race. Worldwide military spending is on its highest level since the Cold War. It is time that the EU tackles the root causes of conflicts rather than investing in military solutions which have not worked in the past.” **added Bram Vranken, researcher for the Belgian organisation Vredesactie**.

1) The 6 policy headings are: I. Single Market & Innovation, II. Cohesion & Values, III. Natural Resources & Environment, VI. Migration & Border Management, V. Security & Defence, VI. Neighbourhood & the World (+ heading VII. Administration)

2) The Preparatory Action for Defence Research (PADR, on-going) and the European Defence Industrial programme (EDIP, to be adopted in the coming weeks) are 2 pilot funding schemes under the current EU budgetary cycle, and constitute the 2 pillars of the European Defence Fund till 2020.

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The [European Network Against Arms Trade](#) (ENAAT) is an informal network of groups and individuals who see the arms trade as a threat to peace, security and development, and the arms industry as a driving force behind the global arms race



More information:

[ENAAT Online Information Tool on the European Defence Fund](#)

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