



# 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

29 November 2017

### Challenging the European Union's decisions on PESCO and the Stability Instrument

#### A call of Church and Peace for the upcoming advent time

*For all the armour of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. (Jesaja 9:5ff)*

As advent is coming, Christians all over the world remember and revitalize the old and still challenging vision of a world of peace, with justice and with righteousness.

Church and Peace as European ecumenical network carries the deep conviction that following the path of the one whom we wait for during advent means to stick to non-violence and peace building.

The more we recognize in these days again with deep concern the plans of the President of the Commission and leaders of most of EU governments to transform the European Union into a military alliance and actor. That includes core aspects of the decision of the defence ministers of 23 member states of 13.11.2017 on the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). We challenge the opinion of the EU High Representative Frederica Mogherini who states: „It is an example of how the European Union will serve Member States' priorities, can be efficient and how our integration is serving the citizens priorities (...)“<sup>1</sup>

The European citizens' priorities might include closer cooperation, efficiency and integration for the best of the people. In the context of defence cooperation it might make sense to 'harmonize' the different national military capacities and save tax payers money in avoiding any longer double defence spending and research (according to the EU Commission 25-100 billions annually could be saved).

But PESCO means as well:

- the obligation to increase defence expenses,
- adding to the 28 national defence expenditures of EU Member States several hundreds of millions of scarce EU budget resources to the European Defence Fund,<sup>2</sup>
- increasing operations to 'protect' the European borders,
- risk for not respecting constitutional conditions for parliamentary approval.

Facing these facts we see PESCO as another way to pump further money into a highly inefficient European defence industrial landscape.

We warn against increasingly investing financial and human resources in military capacities via PESCO as well as other instruments like the European Defence Fund and the regulation establishing a European Defence Industrial Development Programme.

In a similar vein, we again oppose the European Parliament's and Council's agreement on the Commission's proposal to transform the civilian Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) into a tool which should in the near future build military capacities of third countries. We urge the members of European Parliament to reject these legislative changes at its vote on the Danjean report tomorrow (see our earlier press statements on IcSP<sup>3</sup>).

We insist on the need to boost investments in civilian instruments which address the roots of conflicts, violence and war and to strengthen non-military, sustainable instruments for conflict transformation and peace building capacities of the EU instead of weakening them.

Peace building and sustainable development need to be at the core if the "European project" is to meet the present as the future social, economic and political challenges.

We urge the European Parliament as well as the parliaments in the member states to uphold and strengthen the narrative of Europe which contributes to the advent vision of global peace 'with justice and with righteousness'.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage\\_en/34226/Permanent%20Structured%20Cooperation%20\(PESCO\)%20-%20Factsheet](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/34226/Permanent%20Structured%20Cooperation%20(PESCO)%20-%20Factsheet)

<sup>2</sup> Until 2020, the Commission will allocate €590 million to the European Defence Fund. As of 2020, the Commission is proposing to allocate at the minimum €1.5 billion per year. The Fund is not designed to substitute Member States' defence investments, but to enable and accelerate their cooperation. Together with Member States' contributions to finance joint development projects, the Fund could generate a total investment in defence research and capability development of €5.5 billion per year after 2020.  
[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-17-1476\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-1476_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/CP-PR-EU-IcSP-E\\_10-2016.pdf](http://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/CP-PR-EU-IcSP-E_10-2016.pdf)  
<http://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/PR-AGM2017-Strengthen-civilian-peacemaking.pdf>