

EU cannot give military responses to political problems

Written by Sabine Lösing on 26 May 2015 in Opinion
Opinion

Sabine Lösing warns that the EU's approach to political issues is entrenching a military industrial complex.



Three key reports have moved through parliament's security and defence subcommittee which represent an alarming approach to problems facing the European Union.

First, there is the implementation of the common security and defence policy (CSDP) report by Arnaud Danjean. This report, along with other key debates in parliament, takes the form of a 'military wish list' ahead of this June's council meeting.

These reports demand enhanced armament cooperation, including the pooling and sharing of resources. This approach fosters the further development of a military industrial complex and supports the merging of civilian and military research in order to use civilian capabilities for military purposes.

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The Danjean report calls for more robust interventions, increased investments in defence, the adoption of Nato capacity targets for defence spending which would constitute a minimum two per cent of GDP and the deployment of EU battlegroups for all types of so-called crisis-management.

Eduard Kukan and Indrek Tarand's report on financing the common security and defence policy looks for possibilities to skim EU funds for military purposes. This is despite the treaty on European Union not allowing the budget to be used for expenditure arising from operations with military or defence implications.

Their report also demands the expansion of costs eligible under the Athena mechanism, which questions the principle of 'costs lie where they fall' - which would lead to the automatic financial involvement of each member state in every EU military mission.

Ana Gomes' report on the defence-package claims that strengthening the European defence technological and industrial base is of the utmost importance in order to protect the EU's "citizens, interests and values".

Defence cooperation, pooling and sharing and the promotion of European funding opportunities under Horizon 2020 for defence related projects and industries are key aspects of the report. On top of this there are also requests for tax breaks that would essentially be subsidy programmes for the defence and armament industry.

It is claimed that permanent structured cooperation, battlegroups and pooling and sharing would ease the burden on national budgets, but this is not true. These measures do not save money, but they do dismantle and circumvent parliamentary control, as well as the veto of national parliaments on military spending, CSDP missions and other military actions.

What all these reports have in common is that they describe an increasingly violent and volatile security situation in the world and in particular in the European neighbourhood - both south and east - but they do not reflect the EU's negative and escalating role in these current conflicts and crisis situation.

The only consequences of the EU's role are more armament, more money for defence industry and security research and more 'robust' EU missions.

The increase in military 'solutions' to political problems is now also affecting refugees. The fact is that poverty in the European neighbourhood countries has increased and this hits women and children in particular.

Instead of truly tackling or eradicating poverty- which is the root cause of violent conflicts - the EU has instead decided to establish another military mission to stem the flow of migration to Europe's shores through the use of military and other repressive means.

The GUE/NGL group rejects all three of these reports.

About the author

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[Defence and Security](#) [6]



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