

# PEACE AND DISARMAMENT IN EUROPE

For shared détente, peace and security

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The war in Ukraine has accelerated the process of EU militarisation that's been simmering away** since the doctrine of security and defence set out in the EU High Representative's 2003 *European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World*, until 21 March 2022 when the European Council approved the *Strategic Compass for strengthening EU security and defence* by 2030. The military industry and arms lobbies have played a starring role in this process, promoting the construction of a 'Defensive Europe' based on injecting funds for the development and sale of arms.

It is perhaps for this reason that the EU's and its main powers' responses to Russia's invasion of large areas of Ukrainian territory on 24 February 2022, have been to increase the military budget in every Member State, in addition to increasing the EU defence budget, representing an **eminently military response to the conflict with Russia**.

The European Security and Defence budget has tripled from €6.5 billion (2007) to €19.5 billion under the current 2021-27 Multiannual financial framework programme. These figures do not include additional increases specifically related to the war in Ukraine, such as the European Peace Facility providing Ukraine with military support, whose value already reached €39 billion by September 2024.

Europe's military budget also attained record figures in 2023, when €289.3 billion was spent on military expenses: a 21.3% increase from 2022. When you add in the budgets of non-EU countries Norway and the United Kingdom (€77.323 billion combined), NATO's 2023 European military spending totalled €366.623 billion, coming in second place only to the world's top military spender (the USA), above China, and tripling Russia's military spending, according to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data. Europe is also the world's number two arms exporter (again after the USA). In 2022, EU countries exported military goods worth over €36 billion, of which €4.8 billion were sent to Ukraine. All this allows us to affirm that **the trend in Europe is a clear increase in both arms budgets and arms exports**.

**The European response to the war in Ukraine is unquestionably conditioned by the influence of the United States and in the analysis framework imposed by NATO**, despite the fact that security needs on one side of the Atlantic are very different from those on the other. While war against Russia strengthens NATO's role and is economically beneficial to the USA, in Europe it inflicts a wound that comes with economic, and (above all) political and human costs that will impoverish Europe's future generations and make it harder to live in peace. Warmongering and militarism, obvious in a military organisation such as NATO, have become the norm in the EU and practically every Member State, who are also members of the Atlantic Alliance.

This report proposes **overcoming hegemonic warmongering policies in the EU now**, in order to overcome the military framework that encourages military

spending and arms races, which have yet again proved incapable of avoiding war. The incompetence of those who have led European security on either side of the Atlantic is obvious. Although Russia's government has undertaken many actions and has great responsibilities, responsibility for this conflict also lies with the members of European national governments and EU security departments, who have been incapable of wiping war off the continental map.

**A different security focus is needed to achieve real peace in Europe.** A theoretical perspective can be used to build European security to achieve peace (which requires the absence of warmongering), based on recommendations from critical security studies, which must include feminist, environmental and decolonising perspectives. **We propose changing the focus of European security to include a vision of culture and peace that allows us to overcome our currently militarised, warmongering policies.**

We recommend abandoning the security policies based on war developed to date in Europe and switching to security policies that aim to achieve peace, which can include **positive peace, structural justice and the promotion of a culture of peace** rather than defence, **focused on life and biodiversity** rather than national security and elites.

Security for peace in Europe should be based on the kind of honest and true realism that overcomes the fallacy of the theory of misnamed 'realist' international relations. Realism gets things wrong when it insists that mistrust, chaos and confrontation are the only way for nations to relate. **It is unrealistic to believe that peace will be achieved by violent means.** Violence always, irredeemably, ends in more violence.

Security for peace in Europe must abandon deterrence and defence in favour of policies of international cooperation. We must switch away from threat analysis and the desire to pose a threat in order to achieve peace, towards **policies of détente and care for international relations between governments and peoples.**

Security for peace in Europe must be held up by the pillars of **global justice, internationalism, cooperation, fair trade and real decolonisation**, for us to walk towards a new, human geopolitics that's based on cooperation, in order to face our great global challenges from a position of human dignity.

**Security for peace in Europe must be built from a position of independence from NATO and any other military organization or arms lobby.** A policy of security for peace in Europe can only be created in a participatory and democratic manner, involving civil society, and in which the EU's founding values, including the promotion of peace, play a primary role.

This report aims to help build an alternative narrative and go beyond criticism of the policies that have brought Europe to the brink of war. It explores the theoretical foundations that can inspire this, and focuses on the opportunities

provided by peace studies, which propose dedicating resources to preventing future wars, paying attention to their causes and boosting nations' non-militarised political tools in order to avoid war and improve relationships between nations and their peoples. We aim to contribute to the **No to militarization, no to war**<sup>1</sup> campaign, launched with the support of 300 organisations including the Delàs Centre, to expand the number of groups supporting the campaign in Spain and with the ambition of spreading the campaign to Europe.

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1. The manifesto and members can be viewed at the following link: <https://nomilitarism.eu/english/>



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