

Peace, Human Rights, Solidarity and Justice

European United Left • Nordic Green Left
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



GUE/NGL
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Peace, Human Rights, Solidarity and Justice

An alternative EU foreign policy

A peaceful Europe is possible!

The European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) group in the European Parliament is opposed to the EU's foreign and security policy and the structures established by the Lisbon Treaty. We strongly criticise the lack of democratic control and parliamentary influence over this policy area. We call for a drastic revision of the EU's external policy with the following priorities:

- Contributing to the maintenance of peace, stability and human rights through a peaceful and civil foreign policy approach that is non-discriminatory and in line with international law;
- Taking a leading role in the diplomatic and peaceful resolution of conflicts, including mediation, reconciliation, and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) initiatives;
- Poverty eradication, humanitarian aid, sustainable economic and social development and implementation of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals including favouring balanced economic relations, fair trade and fair distribution of wealth and resources in the EU's neighbourhood and the rest of the world;
- Improving, implementing and strengthening the international arms export control regime (through the EU Common Position 2008/944/GASP and the Arms Trade Treaty), and supporting total nuclear disarmament worldwide (through the Non-Proliferation Treaty);
- Reorientation of the EU's strategy in relation to its southern and eastern neighbours, as part of the ongoing review of the European Neighbourhood Policy



(ENP), towards a new framework and relations with these countries and regions that aim to support the development of neighbouring regions and promote employment and education. This approach would replace the 'association agreements' which mainly serve to establish free trade areas that benefit corporate interests, and instead foster a dynamic of partnership and cooperation based on mutual interest with neighbouring countries and countries in the global south.

EU foreign policy in context

Currently, the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is based on the member states' interests in oil, gas and other raw materials, the trade concerns of multinational companies, the Union's desire for geostrategic power and dominance and the advancement of a neoliberal global economic system. Under this policy approach, the EU's diplomacy and conflict resolution initiatives, cooperation and assistance programmes and trade routes for natural resources are increasingly backed by military and police missions.

The roots of regional and international conflicts and other global problems are constantly ignored or only addressed in a symbolic way. Furthermore, the European Union does not reflect on its negative and escalating role in the dramatically aggravated situation in its immediate southern and eastern neighbourhood.

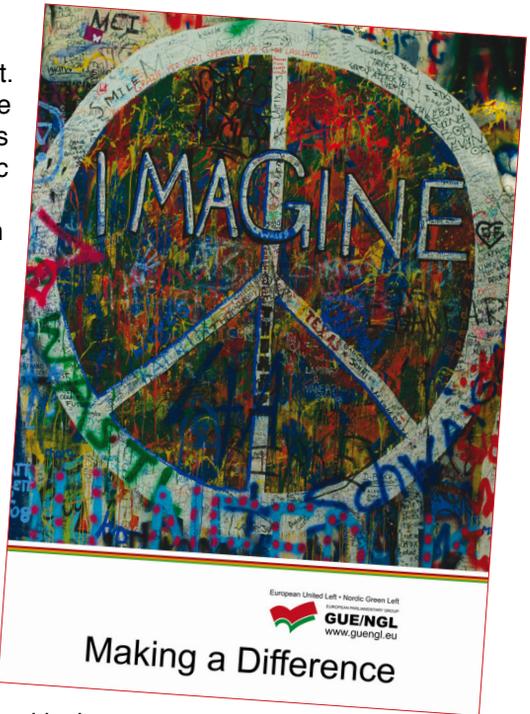
EU member states are involved in numerous wars and military interventions across the globe and as a group they are the third largest arms exporter in the world after the United States and Russia.

Beyond the arms trade, the US and the EU are also 'brothers in arms': the EU-NATO Strategic Partnership allows NATO troops and equipment to be used for EU military missions. This indicates that the often-claimed 'civilian' nature of the EU is increasingly becoming a more military one.

The adoption and implementation of the Lisbon Treaty together with the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) has played a decisive role here. The Lisbon Treaty provides the necessary rules and articles to encourage – and at times force – EU member states into military cooperation, common defence and intervention, armament, civil-military cooperation and more recently, the use of EU funds for military purposes, which is forbidden under Article 41(2) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). This has resulted in the increasing militarisation of the EU.

Further examples of the increased militarisation of the EU include the start-up funds for military missions (Art. 43, TEU), the mutual defence clause (Art. 42 (7), TEU) which even goes beyond Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the solidarity clause which allows the deployment of troops within the EU in case of “man-made or natural disasters”, (Art. 222 (1a), Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), the permanent structured cooperation (Article 42(6), TEU and Protocol No 10 annexed to this treaty), and last but not least, the obligation for armament and investing more money in the defence sector (Article 42 (3), TEU).

In the past, civil policy areas such as humanitarian and development aid, trade and human rights policy were separate from the military and security policies of the EU. However, with the formation of the EEAS – the body within the European Union that now implements much of the aforementioned military cooperation – this separation was intentionally abandoned. Civil and military policy areas have been merged within the EEAS under one leader – the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – currently Federica Mogherini.



Mogherini is the Head of the EEAS, the Head of the European Defence Agency (EDA), the Vice-President of the European Commission and the Chair of the Defence Council. Directly responsible to her are: the EU Military Staff (EUMS), the European Union Military Committee (EUMC), the European Intelligence Analysis Centre (INTCEN), the Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD) and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPOC).

This structure shows very clearly the centralisation and merging of all civil and military policy areas in order to follow and implement the so called 'comprehensive approach' – which in its current form is nothing but the subordination of all relevant policy areas (diplomatic, economic, trade, development and humanitarian aid, justice, home affairs, energy, environment and migration) and financial means under the CFSP/CSDP and therefore purely under the EU's economic and geostrategic interests. The EEAS cannot be controlled by the European Parliament as it was founded as an institution *sui generis* – which means it is not attached to any other EU institution and therefore autonomous.



True circular migration policy!

Many of the EU's partnerships with third countries are now subject to the conditions of 'readmission agreements' which facilitate the return of migrants and refugees to their country of origin or to a country of transit. The GUE/NGL strongly condemns these agreements that outsource the policies of Fortress Europe – even when they are accompanied by mobility agreements.

Readmission agreements are mandatory, whereas mobility agreements are very uncertain arrangements. These are in fact conditioned agreements which reflect the EU's utilitarian obsession with attracting the 'brains' of the countries with which it has concluded partnerships to work in the EU.

The EU's partnerships with third countries are implemented to the detriment of the right of migrants to leave their country and settle in the host country.

The GUE/NGL calls for the establishment of true mobility policies taking into account the real needs of the countries involved. The GUE/NGL supports the development of a true circular migration policy and defends the principle of return between host countries and countries of origin. This refers to the provision for people to either return to their country of origin, or move back and forth between the host country and country of origin, easily.

Palestine

Decades after the beginning of Israel's occupation in Palestine, which has resulted in the loss and suffering of thousands of innocent people, the EU still does not assume its responsibility as a member of the Quartet. The GUE/NGL fully supports the right of Palestinians to an independent Palestinian state, based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace alongside Israel. Our group strongly condemns the policy of collective punishment pursued against the Palestinian people and calls for an end to Israel's impunity over the continuous gross violations of international and humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the



Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our group fully supports President Abbas' request for Palestine to be placed under international protection. We demand an immediate end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, an end to the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip and the demolition of the illegal Israeli wall and settlements. In addition, we call for the EU to implement Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement which outlines Israel's human rights obligations by freezing it, as long as Israel continues to violate human rights.

Our guiding principles

The GUE/NGL group works towards a strictly civilian EU foreign policy. We are strongly opposed to the use of European intervention forces because we are convinced that no crisis can be solved by military means. Sustainable solutions can be found only when the root causes of violent conflicts such as poverty or discrimination are addressed.

Military spending should be reduced in all member states. The funds saved could be used to deal with social and economic problems. This would be a decisive contribution to the solution of both the ongoing financial crisis and the growing social problems in Europe.

The GUE/NGL insists on respect for the right of people to determine their own futures and works towards a strategy which puts crisis prevention, exclusively civil solutions to conflicts, multilateralism and international law at its heart.

It is often said that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are core values of the EU. Yet double standards are applied: while the EU repeatedly criticises the human rights situation in some third countries, the Gulf states do not need to fear harsh words from the Nobel Peace Prize-winning European Union, due to their oil supplies and geostrategic importance. The EU tolerates, and even supports, repressive regimes when it suits geostrategic or economic interests. At home, the EU also does not fight internal violations of human rights with the same vigour as it condemns and punishes those in some other countries. We oppose the current interest-led human rights policy of the EU and call for the universal application and promotion of human rights.

Civil-military cooperation and comprehensive approach

We are against civil-military cooperation in every area, as it involves the incalculable risk of civilians being used to achieve military objectives with far-reaching consequences.

The GUE/NGL objects to the increased efforts of the EU to speed up the provision of financing for ‘civilian missions’ and to simplify decision-making procedures and implementation. We seriously question the purely civilian nature of such missions in many cases as civilian and military aspects are increasingly merged in particular within security sector reform (SSR) and training missions.

We reject the implementation of pilot projects on CSDP research such as the remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS or drones) undertaken jointly by the European Commission and the European Defence Agency (EDA). The GUE/NGL strongly objects in general to any involvement or financing from the EU research funds (the ‘Horizon 2020’ programme) or the EU budget for military, civil-military or security research.

We strongly regret and reject the EU's so-called 'comprehensive approach' in its current implementation as it means the de facto subordination of relevant policy areas under the EU's purely geostrategic and economic interests.

EU-NATO cooperation

The GUE/NGL strongly rejects the promotion and support of the military industrial complex (MIC), the deepening of defence cooperation, the EU-NATO cooperation and the merging of internal and external security. We further condemn the intensification of the aggressive military strategy of NATO and its relocation of military forces to the EU and European eastern countries that are members of NATO, the creation of 'Spearhead', the new ultra-rapid reaction force, and its strategy of encircling Russia.

We further denounce the enlargement of NATO to the borders of the Russian Federation and strongly reject the plans of the new Ukrainian government to apply



for NATO membership as an additional element of a confrontation policy with the Russian Federation which would further destabilise the region and international security in general.

Democracy and parliamentary control

The GUE/NGL denounces the existing lack of parliamentary control over CSDP missions at European and national levels. We also denounce civil-military cooperation and the pooling and sharing concept in which EU member states would combine their military resources for common use, as well as the close cooperation between the EU and NATO, the 'ATHENA' mechanism for military funding and the deployment of EU battlegroups which clearly increase the deficit of parliamentary control! We therefore call for the strengthening of parliamentary scrutiny at all levels and the implementation of a parliamentary reservation mechanism (as this is the best practice) at EU level.

We further reject the financing of military missions and operations and recall that according to Article 41 (2) of the Treaty on European Union, any expenditure arising from actions with military or defence implications must not be charged to the EU budget! We also reject the ATHENA mechanism and the proposed expansion of costs eligible under this instrument such as the deployment of EU battlegroups – as this increases the automatic financial involvement of each member state in every EU military mission.

Anti-militarism and disarmament

Military forces and armaments should be downsized all over Europe. Europe does not need anti-missile systems. We reject all moves to create mechanisms for global military interventions. We insist on the dissolution of all NATO and EU member state foreign military bases and the withdrawal of EU member states' troops from Afghanistan, Iraq and other international warzones. Instead of wasting money on battle groups, 'Spearheads' and military missions, EU member states should implement their commitment to give a minimum of 0.7 per cent of GNP to development aid.

We call for an immediate end to all arms exports, in particular arms exports into conflict regions, and the development of a strict and powerful arms control and restriction regime at EU and global level. The 'Common Position defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment' from 2008 and the Arms Trade Treaty are steps in the right direction, but do not go far enough because there are, inter alia, no sanctions to be feared in cases of non-compliance. We strive for total nuclear disarmament worldwide, a nuclear-weapon-free Europe and a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Mediterranean.

The European Union should meet its increased responsibility for peace and security in Europe and the world through further arms limitation and disarmament initiatives. The EU should formulate a comprehensive conversion strategy and develop a plan for conversion from arms production to civilian goods production as quickly as possible.

Another Europe – a peaceful Europe – is possible.



Shaping a better world – a task for the Left

As a left-wing group, the GUE/NGL underlines the following key issues for international peace and social and environmental justice:

- The strict application of the UN Charter and all other instruments of international law. We work for international relations based on real partnership, cooperation based on mutual advantage, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries.
- Fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms must be guaranteed for all human beings. We condemn the EU's subordination of human rights concerns to its geostrategic and economic interests. We want the EU to complement its fight for democratic freedoms with strong action to ensure economic and social rights.
- We work to change the rules of international trade and we reject the imposition of deregulation and free trade agreements. We reject the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement which is currently under negotiation, as beyond its trade aspects, this agreement will consolidate and strengthen the West as a geopolitical bloc in view of the decline in the hegemonic power of the United States. In addition, the TTIP agreement will mainly benefit multinational corporations and will have a negative environmental, economic and social impact for workers and people in general in both the EU and the US. Instead we support fair trade.
- The EU must stop its crusade to privatise the economy and liberalise services – especially health services, education and water – within the EU and through its trade relations with third countries. The GUE/NGL group is dedicated to maintaining pressure on governments to fulfil the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a first minimum target and to establish balanced economic relations, fair trade and fair distribution of the world's resources and wealth to ensure stability and prosperity in the EU and the world.

- We call for strengthening the links between the EU and developing countries in order to build a strong alliance to oppose social and ecological dumping, to establish and apply international rules guaranteeing social rights, development, cultural diversity and environmental protection, including the fight against climate change.

GUE/NGL MEPs on the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET):

Javier Couso Permuay – Member (Vice Chair of AFET), Spain

Sabine Lösing – Member (Coordinator), Germany

Jean-Luc Mélenchon – Member, France

Miguel Urbán – Member, Spain

Sofia Sakorafa – Member, Greece

Takis Hadjigeorgiou – Substitute, Cyprus

Helmut Scholz – Substitute, Germany

Marie-Christine Vergiat – Substitute, France

Malin Björk – Substitute, Sweden

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The GUE/NGL group in the European Parliament is made up of 52 MEPs from 23 different political delegations and 13 member states who are working for peace, solidarity, social justice, equality, democracy and human rights in Europe and beyond.

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