# Ecumenical Consultation Justice and Peace (ÖKGF)



# Position Checklist for the elections to the European Parliament 23 - 26 May 2019

*As a European citizen you have the right and the opportunity to shape the outcome of the elections to the European Parliament. This 'position checklist' (Wahlprüfsteine) is intended to encourage you to approach candidates on the parties' electoral lists for information and to critically enquire as to what they will stand up for when they are elected to the European Parliament. You will find the parties' European election programmes and their lists of candidates on the internet.*

*The checklist covers the following topics:*

*1. Subsidising the arms industry or financing civil crisis prevention?*

*2. Strengthening non-military, non-violent crisis prevention*

*3. European arms exports*

*4. Migration and asylum.*

**1. Subsidising the arms industry or financing civil crisis prevention?**

A central topic for the newly elected European Parliament (EP) will be further consultations on the *Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of the European Union 2021 to 2027.* On 12 December 2018, a majority of the current MEPs adopted a regulation for the *European Defence Fund* which was launched in 2017, and for which €13 billion are planned to be spent during the term of the new *Multiannual Financial Framework*. This would make the Community of EU Member States the fourth largest investor in defence research compared to the individual EU member states. The *European Defence Fund* is meant to strengthen the competitiveness of the European defence industry. The European Commission plans to spend a further €6.5 billion for "*Military Mobility*".

Altogether, a total of €19.5 billion from the Community budget could then be spent on military purposes, in addition to the national defence budgets and funds for "upgrading measures" of military forces of third countries.

The European Commission recommends the merger of twelve previously independent financing instruments, including the "*European Development Fund"*, the *"Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace"*, the *"Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights"* and the *"Instrument for Neighbourhood Assistance"* into the new foreign policy "*Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument" (NDICI*) of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 . In the NDICI, only €1 billion is allocated to the *"Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace"*, i.e. for civil crisis prevention, - about 1/3 of the planned amount in the current financial framework for 2014 - 2020. Important tasks included in the current financial framework, such as measures for the reintegration of former combatants, the rehabilitation of child soldiers, the clearance of landmines, the promotion of women's groups and reconciliation work would be discontinued for the period after 2020 according to the budget proposals of the European Commission. Instead, migration control, border control and military and police "upgrading" will receive more support.

Like other policy areas, too, the EU's neighbourhood policies are increasingly becoming an instrument of the EU's border control and migration policy. The original goals of promoting democracy, the rule of law and civil society are increasingly receding into the background and being abandoned in favour of further shielding-off of EU member states. Furthermore, development policy will increasingly be put at the service of preventing migration and shall primarily benefit countries that cooperate in this area. According to the European Commission's proposal, the European Parliament should no longer have a say in the final decisions on individual expenditures.

**Ask the candidate the following questions:**

**a) In your (future) function as a Member of the European Parliament, will you oppose supporting arms research and development in the framework of the European Defence Fund with financial resources from the common budget of the European Union amounting to €13 billion for the period of the new Multiannual Financial Framework from 2021 to 2027?**

**b) Will you advocate for continued specific funding and the strengthening of the Development Fund and the Instruments contributing to Stability and Peace, for democracy and human rights and for neighbourhood assistance, in order not to jeopardise the financing of civil crisis prevention and human rights programmes, rather to expand these?**

**c) Will you advocate for the European Parliament to have a say in the allocation of funds in the above-mentioned areas?**

**d) Will you engage to ensure that the EU's existing capacities in diplomacy, mediation and institution-building are strengthened and endowed with the necessary financial resources?**

## 2. Strengthening non-military, non-violent crisis prevention

In recent years, EU Member States have promoted the development of the military dimension of the *Common Security and Defence Policy* (CSDP), notably through the *Permanent Structured Cooperation* (PESCO) and the establishment of the *European Defence Fund*.

A similar dynamic cannot be observed in non-military conflict resolution. Despite all declared commitments to the priority of civil, non-violent conflict resolution, developments in this field are lagging far behind. The existing instruments have usually been successful, yet there is a lack of adequately trained persons for civilian EU missions and of reliable, comprehensive financing. At the same time, since the adoption of the EU's *Global Strategy* (2016), a worrying instrumentalisation of civilian means for border and migration control has been observed.

To strengthen civil conflict resolution, effective structures for early crisis detection, conflict resolution and after-care must be created together with the European External Action Service; these are i.a.: (1) Establishment of a permanent and operational pool of trained persons for civilian missions of all kinds, (2) Better and more reliable financing of civilian peace missions, not only by the EU Member States but also in the common budget of the *Common Foreign and Security Policy*, (3) Separation of civilian and military tasks. (4) Creating capacities for regular evaluation of civilian missions and (5) Support for scientific peace research within the framework of the EU in order to ensure independent analyses of the *Foreign and Security Policy*.

Relations between Russia and the EU Member States and the United States of America have deteriorated in a worrying way in recent years. A new East-West conflict is looming which has been shaped to a large extent by NATO’s eastward enlargement and Russia's occupation of Ukrainian territories in violation of international law. Diplomatic relations have been partially broken off or frozen, and the policy of imposing sanctions has not brought the conflict any closer to a solution, neither in the narrower nor in the broader sense. The diplomatic and arms control instruments necessary cannot be provided or created by the EU alone. This example rather illustrates that the EU must strengthen the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (OSCE).

The OSCE is a proven pan-European system of collective security, based on diplomacy and confidence-building, with arbitration procedures for peaceful settlement of disputes and facilities for crisis prevention, conflict resolution and arms control. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights trains government and law enforcement officials and non-governmental organisations to promote and monitor human rights, and a High Commissioner monitors the rights of minorities. The EU should strengthen all these dimensions materially and financially, rather than defining security primarily militarily and investing in NATO support.

**Ask your candidate the following questions:**

**a) Will you engage in the European Parliament, e.g. in budget consultations, or in the case of revision of the EU Treaties, for the development and financing of effective structures for early crisis detection, conflict resolution and after-care in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) which would aim at a sustainable strengthening of the civilian dimension of the CSDP?**

**b) What possibilities do you see in dealing with Russia and Ukraine, what role could the European Parliament play in de-escalating the conflict? In this conflict, do you also advocate for strengthening civil society engagement and exchange for peace, human and minority rights by the EU?**

**c) Will you seek to ensure that the EU supports the United Nations and its regional organisations, in particular the OSCE, in developing and using their instruments for prevention and peaceful settlement of disputes?**

## 3. European arms exports

According to the Swedish Peace Research Institute SIPRI, EU Member States' arms exports account for 27 per cent of total world exports. (2013-2017).

In the Yemen war, currently the world's biggest humanitarian catastrophe, bombs are dropped which were provided by an Italian subsidiary of the German arms corporation Rheinmetall. The Saudi Kingdom has e.g. the Eurofighter Typhoon at its disposal for the bombardments - a European aircraft jointly built by arms corporations in Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK. The air strikes by the Saudi Arabian-led military alliance are a major cause of civilian victims.

In 2008, the European Council (EU Council of Ministers) adopted the *Common Position defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment*, and the European Parliament adopted a resolution on arms exports in 2018: *Implementation of the Common Position* calling for an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia in view of the attacks on civilians in Yemen. The *Common Position*, which obliges member states to defend the Union's positions not only in relation to their own policies but also internationally, includes eight criteria for arms exports, including for example criterion 2 "Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law by the country of final destination" or criterion 4 "Maintenance of peace and stability in the recipient region". However, the actual form of arms export policy is decided by the respective member states. Political pressure must continue to be exerted at national and EU level to prevent German arms corporations evading the European criteria by using places where they are most laxly interpreted and thus undermine national regulations.

Small arms and light weapons are regarded as the weapons of mass destruction of the 21st century. The vast majority of war deaths are due to the use of these weapons. Even beyond war scenarios, the effects of small arms are devastating.

This is mainly due to their longevity, ease of use and uncontrollable proliferation. The EU should therefore generally ban the export of small arms and light firearms and related ammunition to third countries.

**Ask your candidate the following questions:**

**a) Will you advocate for an EU arms embargo for the states involved in the Yemen war and demand compliance also from the nation states?**

**b) In view of the large number of victims of small arms, will you advocate for an EU-wide export ban on small arms and related ammunition to countries outside the EU?**

**c) Will you work at EU level for more transparency and uniform reporting obligations for Member States, including accountability for disputed exports?**

**d) Will you advocate for mechanisms such as sanctions to ensure consistent interpretation and uniform implementation of the Common Position criteria by Member States?**

## 4. Asylum and migration

The EU has responded to the increase in numbers of refugees 2014-2016 with the expansion of the common border and coast control, including through the massive expansion and revision of the mandate of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex. The number of employees is to be increased from 1,200 to 10,000 and the planned budget to €34.9 billion by 2027. More than 2,200 people drowned in the Mediterranean Sea on their way to Europe in 2018.

Rather than continuing rescue operations such as Mare Nostrum by the Italian government (2014-2016), even humanitarian organisations have been prevented from carrying out rescue operations and criminalised since 2017.

The "Hotspot Approach" of the European Commission and the Turkey Deal have led in the past two years to overcrowded camps, especially on the Greek islands, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Libya. The inhumane housing, long waiting times and living cramped in a confined space inevitably lead to conflicts. In 2014, revised versions of the directives on reception conditions, qualification for international protection, asylum procedures, Dublin III and Eurodac were adopted, which are intended to set common European standards for dealing with persons seeking protection. Although set to be in force since 2016 at the latest, they have largely not been implemented in all Member States. It is vital that measures in the area of security and control do not come at the expense of the protection and reception of refugees, that reception and asylum procedures are better organised and financed and that legal migration routes are agreed at EU level.

**Ask the candidate the following questions:**

**(a) Will you engage in the development and extension of safe and regular pathways for protection seekers and migrants? Do you support:**
**- fast and more generous family reunification for asylum seekers and refugees,**
**- larger quotas for the resettlement of refugees to Europe,**
**- distribution of asylum seekers within the EU (relocation),**
**- humanitarian visas as called for by the EP in December 2018,**
**- legal migration for employment, study and training?**

**b) Do you advocate for EU-wide decentralised accommodation and reception in Europe?**

**c) Are you committed to the implementation of existing common asylum law standards?**

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