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European Commission defence proposals

More cooperation needed instead of cash injection for arms industry

The European Commission has today presented three papers on defence policy: a reflection paper with possible future scenarios, a communication on a new European Defence Fund, and a proposal for a regulation on financial support for the European arms industry. The European Commission's proposals are based on the wrong strategy, says Greens/EFA president **Ska Keller**:

"The European Commission's proposals would turn the European Union into a second NATO. We do not need unnecessary parallel structures for the defence of European territory, but closer cooperation between EU Member States. The failure of Member States to cooperate in research and procurement has led to unnecessary duplication and wasted money. We do not need more money for the defence industry, much less a new arms fund. When the EU Member States pool projects, money is saved and our defence is better and more efficient.

"The European Union should remain a peace project, with a focus on crisis prevention, mediation and diplomacy. It is irresponsible and unacceptable for the European Commission to seek to allocate funds to the defence industry that are urgently needed elsewhere to fight unemployment, to support small and medium-sized enterprises and to strengthen weaker regions. This is not a sensible project for the future of the European Union."

Greens/EFA security and defence spokesperson **Bodil Valero** adds:

"The Commission's proposals are a step in the wrong direction. Rather than looking to increase funding, the Commission should be tackling the endless duplication of projects. It is ridiculous to have more than 20 projects across Europe for new armoured vehicles. The Commission has itself already identified the potential for up to 100 billion euros in annual savings if Member States get serious about cooperation on defence technology. It is time to enforce the EU Defence Ministers' target on the pooling of defence research spending and for the Commission to make sure that transparent and cost-saving internal market rules are being respected."

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