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[Press release](#) | 13.09.2017

Greens/EFA force vote on the Militarisation of EU development policy

Development

Tomorrow, the Greens/EFA group will attempt to force a vote on the militarisation of development policy. MEPs will decide whether or not the mandate for the negotiations of the European Commission's proposed revision to the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) requires further parliamentary approval or can go direct to trilogues.

The Commission's proposals would see the EU's only instrument for civilian conflict prevention being used for military purposes, despite it's being based on a development policy legal base (Article 209 TFEU). The proposal has proven controversial and is incompatible with EU law. The Commission even plans to transfer funds from the development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) to the IcSP for launching military capacity building projects abroad.

Despite this, the Foreign Affairs Committee voted to grant a mandate for negotiations without a plenary vote. The Greens/EFA group has collected the necessary political support to ensure a vote takes place on this decision tomorrow.

Bodil Valero, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur, said:

"This is too important a decision not to face a vote by all elected MEPs. It is wrong for scarce and much needed development and civilian conflict prevention tools to be used to strengthen foreign armies. But beyond the powerful political and moral arguments, it is simply against the rules. Funds from a development policy legal base cannot be used for the purpose of military security, as has been confirmed by legal services and European Court of Justice case law.

"I call especially on Social Democrats and Liberals to reconsider their position and join us in opposing the illegal militarisation of this vital development tool."

What is the Commission proposing?

- In July 2016, the European Commission proposed to broaden the scope of the IcSP to include military capacity building in third countries, mainly in Africa (their proposal is available [here](#)).

- The proposal would add to its scope capacity building of military actors in third countries, covering a broad range of possible activities (although the financing of arms and ammunition was excluded).
- A budget of EUR 100 million has been earmarked for a period of three years – this would not be fresh money, but four existing funds would be reduced by 25 Million each: the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI); the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI); the EU's civilian Police and Justice missions under the CFSP and the buffer for the foreign affairs chapter of the budget.
- The proposal was subsequently supported by the majority of MEPs in the lead Foreign Affairs Committee, including those from EPP, S&D, ALDE and ECR.

Why is Greens/EFA objecting?

We have two primary objections to the European Commission's proposal

1. The militarisation of the EU's only instrument for civilian conflict prevention.

- The IcSP is the EU's only instrument for civilian conflict prevention.
- It must remain civilian and civilian conflict prevention should rather be strengthened than marginalized within the instrument. We believe that development and security must re-enforce each other, but the nexus between cannot mean that development funds will now be used for security purposes.
- It's budget for the current MFF is EUR 2.3 Billion. It finances 250 projects in 70 countries.
- The Greens/EFA group was instrumental in shaping many aspects of the design of the IcSP, including strengthening peace-building and conflict prevention within the instrument and ensuring that sufficient funds are available for conflict prevention (see here for more details)

2. The legal basis is highly questionable

- Legally, the IcSP is based on the development policy article 209 TFEU which stipulates that all measures need to pursue development objectives.
- Legal services of all three institutions (European Parliament, Council, and Commission) have produced opinions ruling out the use of IcSP for military capacity building as such activities would pursue military security objectives.
- In addition, the European Court of Justice has ruled several times that policy measures must have one centre of gravity and that centre of gravity has to be in line with the legal base – this suggest that military capacity building cannot be a part of this policy instrument as its centre of gravity is military security and not poverty reduction, etc.

The European Parliament rules

Under the new parliamentary rules introduced in January 2017, the lead committee may vote to approve a negotiating mandate on behalf of the parliament. 76 signatures are needed to demand a plenary vote on whether this can proceed. The Greens/EFA group has the support of GUE MEPs and individual MEPs from ALDE and 5Stelle/EFDD.

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