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Press release | 11.07.2017

Grand coalition opens the door to misuse of civilian tools and development funds

EU Military Capacity Building in third countries

The European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) has today voted in favour of proposals that would see development funding diverted to military capacity building. The majority of MEPs in the AFET committee backed a report on the amendment of the regulation establishing an instrument contributing to stability and peace (IcSP). The proposals would see development funding used to build military capacity in third countries, mainly in Africa.

Bodil Valero, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur in AFET, comments:

"We are completely opposed to the militarisation of the EU's only instrument for civilian conflict prevention. It would be nothing short of scandalous if development money were to be diverted to the European defence industry in the future. Not only would this be completely at odds with the purpose of civilian conflict prevention and development funding, it would also be illegal, according to the Lisbon Treaty and case-law of the European Court of Justice. Security and development should be mutually reinforcing but that does not mean that we should spend scarce civilian resources on expensive military technology.

"EPP, S&D, ALDE and ECR need to consider the full implications of what they are doing. The IcSP regulation is based on the development cooperation article 209 (TFEU) and is the EU's only tool for funding civilian conflict prevention policies. To abandon this aim would not only be politically irresponsible, it would also be at odds with the treaties and the rule-of-law inside the EU. We believe that, according to the Treaties, such military activity can only be implemented within the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy."

Background

The Commission proposal, which is supported by the AFET report voted on today, aims to build military capacity building in third countries, mainly in Africa. The IcSP is the EU's only instrument for civilian conflict prevention. 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. EPP, S&D, ALDE and ECR all backed the proposals, which will face a plenary vote in September.

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Responsible MEPs



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