

European Parliament Votes to Give €13 Billion Subsidy to Arms Companies Via European Defence Fund

By [Andrew Smith](#)

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Campaign Against Arms Trade

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

Campaigners have condemned the decision of the European Parliament to support a €13 billion budget for the 'European Defence Fund' for 2021-2027.

The proposal was included in a report called 'Establishing the European Defence Fund' which was compiled by the Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). This committee is formed by politicians from across the parliament.

The Commission proposed €13 billion for the fund for the period 2021-2027 (in current prices), of which €4.1 billion are to be allocated to research actions and €8.9 billion to development actions.

The concept of the fund was announced by President Juncker in 2016 and backed by the European Council later that year. Between 2017-2020, a total of €590 million will be channeled to the military industry through this fund in initial pilot projects. This spending will be totally eclipsed by the proposed increase.

The advisory group/ Group of Personalities that initially developed the policy was dominated by arms companies. This Group was made up of 16 members, 9 of which were from arms companies or private research groups. Six of the companies that have already benefited from pilot phase had members on the group.

Member States refused to exclude funding for the development of fully autonomous weapons in the 2019-2020 pilot phase of the Defence Fund, and the draft Regulation for 2021-2027 specifically mentions "disruptive technologies" as a focus, meaning weapons or technologies which "can radically change the concepts and conduct of" war, such as artificial intelligence.

Andrew Smith of Campaign Against Arms Trade said:

"This sets a very negative precedent and will see billions of pounds more of public money being used to subsidise arms companies.

The European Union was envisaged as a peaceful project, it should be investing in jobs and research projects that promote sustainable industries and contribute to the prevention of conflicts.

Whatever your views on Brexit and the UK's role in Europe, it should not be using public money to fund research for companies that profit from war."

This represents a major precedent for the EU - which had its roots in plans to bring peace to Europe. It has not funded these kinds of projects in the past. Last month, 42 campaign groups from across Europe issued a joint statement to oppose the fund. You can see it here.

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