

# WORLD PEACE COUNCIL



10 OTHONOS STR, 10557 ATHENS GREECE  
TEL.: +30-210-3316326, FAX: +30-210-3224302  
[HTTP://www.wpc-in.org](http://www.wpc-in.org), e-mail: [info@wpc-in.org](mailto:info@wpc-in.org) [wpc@otenet.gr](mailto:wpc@otenet.gr)

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## **DECLARATION OF THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE IN DEFENCE OF PEACE Lisbon Portugal September 28/29 2007**

Declaration of the Conference of European Peace Organisations jointly convened by the World Peace Council (WPC), Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) and Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation

*Participants representing 20 Peace Organisations and Movements from 14 European countries gathered in Lisbon, Portugal at the same time as the informal meeting in Evora, Portugal of the ministers of Defense of the EU. The meeting of peace organizations after fruitful exchange of views issued the following declaration:*

1. The peoples of Europe are facing growing threats to global peace and security resulting from militarization of international relations and increasing imperialist aggressions around the world. The peace conference demands an immediate cessation of these war driven policies. Instead, the peace conference upholds the promotion of peaceful relations in the continent and with the whole world and calls for improvements in the social well being of the people's of Europe.
2. Considering the rejection of the European Constitutional Treaty in many societies, and in particular by referenda in France and Holland, participants in the peace conference declare that the reformed European Treaty continues to be a clear expression of the ongoing dangerous course towards increasing the concentration of political decision making power directed against the sovereignty of the peoples, pervasive intrusion of security agencies into civic life within the Union, and the projection of strengthened military might onto the world stage. The reformed Treaty ignores the views of the people and serves the interests of the corporations in all spheres. We demand that the will of the peoples of Europe and their democratic rights to be respected, and that any reform treaty should be submitted to referenda in every country of the Union.
3. The growing supremacy of the economic interest of corporations and the states is intimately connected to the militarization of Europe and has resulted in diminished civic, social and labour rights and the criminalization of civic resistance. The undermining of the quality of democratic rights and democratic institutions has paved the way for the intrusion and promotion of extremist doctrines and actions by aggressive criminal groups such as emerging xenophobic and Nazi gangs, on the one hand, and campaigns against and political persecution of progressive and peace forces, on the other, both being alien to the sentiments and interests of the social and people's movements.
4. International relations are becoming more and more militarized. The European Union is more frequently taking aggressive stances in its international relations vis a vis the resolution of latent and emerging conflicts, or prolonged and ongoing wars. The complicity of the European Union with NATO, a self-appointed aggressive alliance of world jurisdiction, is not only a danger to peace in the world but as well a dangerous and self-destructive policy for the peoples of Europe.

The active military interventions by the EU in the Balkans, Central Asia and Middle East continue and are to be condemned. The presence of numerous European military bases and increased deployment of military forces in Africa (namely the EU mission in Chad and the Central African Republic) are cases for deep concern considering the past and in view of future developments in that continent.

5. The further militarization of the European Union, by the installation of military bases outside national borders, the creation of rapid deployment interventionist army battle corps and new naval groups designed to impose its political-economic will in Europe and elsewhere in the world, the development of new weapons and integrated military surveillance and command systems, the trade or supply of weapons to third parties to serve economic interests or gain economic or political leverage by use of force overseas, are all symptoms of an imperialist policy that represents an immoral and immense waste of resources and poses a perilous danger to international security and peace. To the contrary, the peoples of Europe demand a stop to the militarization of Europe.

6. Combined modern space and ground platforms allow for global intelligence, surveillance and command means that, in conjunction with available launch carriers and missiles empower the USA and some other military powers to lead the world into newer and unimaginable dangerous levels of warfare, in the core of the European continent, at its boundaries and beyond.

Developments on European territory or elsewhere, that result in military escalation, namely in the domain of land and space platforms that carry warfare to outer space, are to be deeply rejected as hegemonic and imperialist, challenging peace and security and provoking further military threats.

7. We have witnessed a renewed expansion of the global military expenditures over the past decade, at an annual growth rate of nearly 4%, reaching \$ 1,200 billion USD in 2006 (half of this accounted for by the USA). Only one part of that huge destructive expenditure would have been sufficient to implement the Development Goals agreed by the UN Millennium Summit in the year 2000 aimed at the eradication of poverty and securing basic education and health conditions in the world.

8. It is in the earnest interest of the peace loving peoples of Europe and the world in general that the European Union renounces any kind of neo-colonialist or paternalistic attitude vis a vis third parties. Instead, the Union ought to engage in open and mutual relations with neighbouring countries and all those with whom they share economic and political interrelations. In no case can any country invoke "national interest" and resort to aggression in order to gain access to essential resources or commodities.

9. Europe ought to promote an open dialogue among nations, fostering demilitarization and denuclearization, through international consultation within the framework of the UNO and of the OSCE. This should be undertaken while respecting past treaties and their enforcement, in particular those treaties that have contributed to diminishing the growth of military threats and that promoted détente along the past decades.

All parties ought to abide by their commitments and neither renounce nor impose them unilaterally, as some nuclear powers have done and are doing. European nuclear powers in particular, ought to be active parties in reducing and in renouncing the possession, deployment or use of such weapons of mass destruction.

Our urgent purpose and resolve is to establish nuclear weapons free zones and finally attain complete banishment of nuclear weapons all over the world.

10. The peoples of Europe have repeatedly expressed their desire for a better future and their opposition to military interventions, aggressions and occupations where their countries are involved. As well they have expressed their active solidarity with the peoples who are the victims of aggression or any form of oppression. We express our solidarity with all the peoples of the former Yugoslavia who confront the consequences of imperialist interference and aggression aimed at converting their countries into protectorates of the USA, EU or NATO and who are

compelled to host foreign military bases. We denounce the US and EU plans to recognize an independent Kosovo as a clear violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and an open violation of international law.

11. Peace movements all over Europe are expressing their support and solidarity with the peoples of Poland and the Czech Republic, who are rejecting the deployment of US "Missile Defense Shield" bases in their countries. The growth of NATO is proving to be a pretext for expanding its military infrastructures into Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania and Bulgaria, accelerating a trend of militarization of the whole European territory and the lives of their people, promoting an aggressive posture vis a vis neighboring countries and threatening others elsewhere in the world.

This course of events contradicts the desire for peace of the peoples of Europe who reject aggressive alliances and demand that immediate steps be taken to effect the dismantling of NATO.

12. The capitalist economic system is depleting natural resources at a fast rate. There is a growing military competition among capitalist states for access and possession of the remaining resources. War is not only immoral, it also fails to accomplish the perverse purposes of sustaining economically the great political powers and economic interests that engage in war to appropriate and exploit the riches of other countries.

The history of the late colonial wars, the Vietnam-war and the more recent wars on Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon, the ongoing genocide in Palestine, prove that military might cannot force the peoples to submit and surrender their inalienable and legitimate right to resist the aggressors.

In this context we vehemently reject any move, by whatever pretext, that promotes an attack on Iran and declare it to be one more flagrant violation of international law and the UN Charter. We likewise demand a halt to the involvement of European countries and the EU in Afghanistan, siding with the USA and NATO (in ISAF), and firmly reject the idea of an EU-lead EUROPOL mission there.

13. It is our peaceful resolve to renounce the ongoing arms race and to fight for the demilitarization and disarmament of Europe, to promote equitable political relationships among nations, free of military threats and imperialist domination.

That vision encompasses a continent free of foreign military bases and disengaged from any military alliance.