



Europe's Promise of Peace: Embracing Human Security and Just Peace in EU Policies

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As Catholic organisations, we stand united in advocating for a European Union that prioritises Just Peace as envisioned by its Founders. The history of reconciliation between the member states of the European Community has shown us that for sustainable, lasting peace it is not enough to understand peace as the mere absence of war. Rather, it is necessary to address all dimensions of peace in order to achieve sustainable, lasting peace.

We therefore **wish to remind the EU and its Member States of their foundational commitment to this comprehensive vision of peace. This includes upholding human dignity and justice for all, cherishing dialogue as a preferred means to resolve conflicts, pursuing value-based economic cooperation and investing in peace education to promote mutual understanding and respect.** If fully embracing its potential to settle conflicts through nonviolent means, we believe that the European Union can light lamps of hope in these dark times for humanity marked by wars and divisions, by acting as a united, trustful and integrating force, cherishing democratic principles and the rule of law, within and outside its borders. To achieve this security must be understood from a broader, long-term human security perspective.

Therefore, **we urge European decision-makers to orient their priorities towards integral and sustainable security in view of a just and lasting peace. In this regard, we particularly encourage them to consider the following actions:**

1. Reaffirming International Law, Human Rights, and Renewing Multilateral Institutions

- Reaffirming International Law and Human Rights
We urge the EU and its Member States to be **firm advocates for the restoration of adherence to International Law**, with a specific emphasis on the principle of non-aggression as outlined in the UN Charter, the safeguarding and enforcement of Human Rights, and compliance with International Humanitarian Law. Upholding these fundamental principles is essential for fostering peace and stability both within the European Union and globally.
- Revitalise and Reform Multilateral Institutions
In an increasingly fragmented world, revitalising and reforming key multilateral institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is crucial for effective global governance and conflict resolution. Strengthening these institutions with a focus on human dignity, the rule of law, and sustainable peace will foster a more inclusive



and cooperative international order capable of addressing the complex challenges of the 21st century.

2. Stepping Up Diplomatic Efforts and Pursuing an Integral Approach to Peace

- Prioritising Constructive Diplomacy for Conflict Resolution
Constructive diplomacy in its essence prioritises the protection of human dignity and human rights, with the potential of achieving Just Peace. Implementing it effectively means addressing the root causes of conflicts, honouring all victims and their suffering, and preventing the perpetuation of injustices. **We therefore call on the EU to enhance its diplomatic efforts aligned with these principles at both global and local levels, in order to de-escalate tensions and facilitate peaceful, nonviolent resolutions**, thereby contributing to a more stable and secure international order.
- Emphasising the Interconnectedness of Peace and Justice, and Addressing 'Invisible' Conflicts
Peace and justice are deeply interconnected, forming the bedrock of a fair and equitable society, where all persons can thrive in dignity and security. **We thus urge that the pursuit of peace be always accompanied by a commitment to justice in all its forms and expressions, including social, economic, political and ecological justice.** Moreover, often receiving less public attention, pervasive issues such as extreme poverty, social inequality and environmental degradation, are a major threat to human security and peace. Although the EU has initiated various commendable actions and projects to tackle these challenges, a more coherent and comprehensive approach is needed, one informed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly recognising peace as a core aspect of sustainable development (SDG 16). **We urge the EU to overcome its at times siloed policy approach by focusing more on holistic solutions and better reflecting the interconnectedness of environmental issues with social and economic factors. In this respect, we also encourage European policy-makers to promote increased awareness and education among EU citizens on the broader implications of human security and peace.**
- Call for a Comprehensive EU Strategy for Conflict Prevention and Peace
To strengthen the EU's conflict prevention capacity and to enhance the coherence of an integral approach to peace, **we call for the development of a comprehensive EU conflict prevention and peace strategy. This strategy should foresee substantial allocation of financial resources and personnel, as well as a wide range of nonviolent effective tools.** By implementing a strategic approach to conflict prevention and peace that emphasises early action, risk assessment and proactive multi-sectoral engagement, the EU can enhance its capacity to avert violent conflicts and address emerging threats more effectively. Moreover, **a strategic approach to peace based on an integral security concept that also integrates aspects of social justice and environmental sustainability, can foster a more coherent implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.**



3. Addressing Conflict Dynamics and Fostering a Human Security Approach

- Navigating Modern Warfare and Embracing a Human Security Approach
In an era marked by technological advancements, sophisticated armament and complex security challenges, **we urge European policy-makers to focus on peaceful investment at the service of human security and on nonviolent strategies of defence and deterrence.** Nonviolent deterrence may include sanctions, diplomatic pressure and nonviolent civil resistance.
- Practising solidarity with refugees and IDPs
Solidarity with the victims of war and violence is an integral part of the humanitarian approach. This solidarity must also be expressed by the EU and its member states by supporting those who have had to leave their homes due to war and violence. **European policy-makers are called upon to create and respect a framework that enables refugees to live a life that allows them at least a certain degree of normality and integration into the host society.** This requires sufficient psychosocial support, the opportunity to participate in community life and to access the labour market. **Our appreciation goes to the many volunteers and full-time helpers who are fully committed to supporting refugees.** Such energetic commitment must be encouraged and supported. Our deepest respect goes also to the many efforts undertaken by refugees themselves. Despite the enormous psychological strain caused by the war and the concern for their loved ones, many of the refugees endeavour to learn the language of their host country. They support the economy of the host countries through their labour and establish contacts with the local population. This should not only be encouraged, but also appreciated.
- Improving the regulations on arms exports
Military equipment (including dual-use goods) and military technologies must not be treated like goods that can normally be traded on the free market. A profit orientation that accepts or even encourages the creation of new conflicts or human rights violations by autocratic regimes in order to maximise profits must be decisively counteracted. **Regulations on arms export control must be tightened up accordingly and implemented consistently.**
- Continuing identifying windows of opportunity for disarmament
Even though the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has made the framework conditions for this considerably more difficult, the long-term goal must be to continue to identify opportunities for conflict prevention and disarmament. The current geopolitical landscape, characterised by heightened tensions and military posturing, underscores the urgency of these efforts. In this respect, **we also call on the EU to work towards the activation of the United Nations General Assembly's Fourth Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD-IV) to promote integral and sustainable security by transparency and confidence-building.** By engaging in multi-stakeholder discussions on nuclear deterrence and emerging technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence, and committing to disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation,



related risks of escalation and misuse can be mitigated, a more predictable arms control regime be devised and some of the existential risks associated with these technologies be prevented.

- Strengthening EU's Role in Promoting Peace and Stability

We advocate for a **more active and coherent engagement in peacekeeping missions, by prioritising civilian means of crisis prevention and management, and promoting stability primarily through diplomatic means.** EU peacekeeping missions should always strive to uphold the inherent dignity of the human person by protecting civilians as an utmost priority, which does not only include physical protection, but also necessitates monitoring human rights violations, while ensuring that civilians can fully enjoy their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Since lasting just peace is not merely born out of structures and strategies, but has to be sown by people, it is the task and responsibility of everybody to be an architect and an artisan of peace.

We therefore extend an invitation not only to policy-makers, but also to civil society organisations, religious institutions and citizens, to unite in a culture of encounter, peace and nonviolence, which is embraced, cherished and spread by each one of us.



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