

## Report on the **Peace conference:**

### **“There is an Alternative - No to NATO”**

**June 2-3, 2016, European Parliament, Brussels**

07/06/2016

With the Warsaw NATO Summit 2016 just over a month away / Ahead of the Warsaw NATO summit in July 2016, and in order to address the critical need for peace-building and global disarmament, the GUE/NGL group organised a Peace and Anti-NATO Conference in the European Parliament in Brussels on 2 and 3 June.

The conference, titled “There is an Alternative - No to NATO”, brought together high-level participants including MEPs, political leaders, journalists, academics, stakeholders and experts from all over the world. This two day conference provided an opportunity to have a critical debate on NATO’s expansion policy, and to discuss potential solutions for demilitarisation.

GUE/NGL MEPs Sabine Lösing, group coordinator in AFET committee, and Javier Couso Permuy, vice-chair of AFET committee, opened the conference.

**German MEP Lösing** highlighted the dangers of the geopolitical situation we are facing today, due to NATO’s logic of armaments, defence and expansion. Further, **Spanish MEP Couso Permuy** stressed that the ultimate goal of the conference, namely to rethink NATO, to get away from the military focus sought by its leaders and to free Europe from its subordination to the United States’ geostrategic interests.

The first of the three panels analysed NATO’s geopolitical background. The economic aspect of the war industry was highlighted and it emerged by Maria Socorro Gomes, President of the World Peace Council, that during the crisis military budgets had not been cut at all. It was denounced how citizens’ rights have been made subordinate to spending on military and how NATO is inventing excuses to boost capacity and equipment.

This aspect was reiterated by **Greek MEP Nikolaos Chountis**, who accused NATO of using the refugee crisis to become involved in the Aegean region. He denounced that the use of military means to create a military wall to stop refugees from fleeing their countries is just a pretext to gain greater military control of the area.

The importance of being present everywhere is part of NATO’s strategy of interference and control. This approach has a very concrete and pragmatic aim: exploitation of people and natural resources of third countries

Indeed, it emerged during the interventions on the “NATO’s warfare and military infrastructure” panel that NATO’s plans consist of disseminating military bases in strategic places in order to have

the materials and logistic resources to let the organisation react very rapidly in cases of emergency. In this context **Swedish MEP Malin Björk** invited speakers from Sweden to discuss the current NATO-expansion policy in the North, as well as the renunciation of the neutrality status of some EU countries.

Supporting this point, **Cypriot MEP Takis Hadjigeorgiou** called for the demilitarisation of Cyprus denouncing NATO's role there: "if you look at the history of Cyprus you can see clearly the consequences of NATO's intervention."

The Peace conference concluded with all participants launching an international anti-NATO protest. They came up with a clear message to NATO and the European Union containing [concrete proposals](#):

- Several speakers highlighted the crucial need to stop the expansion of NATO, especially in Eastern Europe towards Russia and to end all actions driving the world towards a new Cold War.
- **Portuguese MEP João Pimenta Lopes** insisted on the need to end all political-military blocs.
- There was a unanimous agreement on the need to end EU-NATO cooperation.
- In addition, participants unanimously called for the disarmament and dismantling of all NATO bases throughout the world and called on NATO to immediately put a stop to all their missions on high seas, including the Mediterranean, the Aegean and the Gulf of Aden as well as in North Africa and the Middle East. They also reject the increasing of NATO's presence in Latin-American and the Caribbean.