

# Response to the ETI Green Paper

## from Campagne tegen Wapenhandel (NL), 23/08/06

Welcoming the Commission's launch of the ETI Green Paper, Campagne tegen Wapenhandel (the Dutch Campaign against Arms Trade) wishes to make several comments, based on both our experience with decision-making on EU arms control issues, and recently published research into the military-industrial lobby efforts to influence emerging EU security and defence policies.[\[1\]](#)

From this specific expertise we would like to contribute the following remarks and suggestions on increased transparency around the role of lobbying in EU decision-making, with a focus on European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

- Campagne tegen Wapenhandel would first of all like to emphasise the fundamental imbalance in resources: lobbying efforts on EU peace and security issues are currently overwhelmingly dominated by lobbyists representing military-industrial business interests. The sector's main lobby organisation, ASD, as well as individual corporate representations greatly outnumber the few independent peace and security organisations, both in staff numbers and budget.
- Related to this is the problem of privileged access: EU decision makers have much more and much closer contact with industry representatives, than with civil society. An example of this is the direct access which the industry had to the working group on defence issues of the European Convention. Three industry representatives were asked to present their views on the military role of the EU and the European constitution, whereas not a single civil society organisation was invited to present their perspectives.
- Similarly we have seen a number of European Commission initiated 'task forces'[\[2\]](#) on issues related to the ESDP that were mere Commission-cum-industry get-togethers, rather than independent advisory groups. The industrial domination of these task forces make them an excellent forum for the arms industry to get their policy and budgetary wishes not only heard but also incorporated in policy proposals for the Commission. Though industry's financial expectations have not been fully met, their close links with and direct involvement in the Commission's preparatory work has significantly contributed to the introduction of a large budget for so-called 'security research' within the FP7 research budget.

Though part of the work of such task forces has been made public, such set-ups based on privileged access severely undermine the faith of the general public in the way decision making processes take place in Brussels. It confirms the picture that exists with many Europeans of a policy process that is dominated by big business interests.

- A similarly worrying trend is taking place with the development of the European Defence Agency. Identifying the arms industry as a stakeholder in processes establishing new ESDP directions directly goes against democratic principles. Instead of elected governments and parliamentarians - representatives of the people - it is the arms industry that dominates such a sensitive issue as the future of European defence policy.
- **The enormous political influence of the arms industry on US military expenditure and**

**other areas of defense policy are well-known and widely recognised as an example of excessive corporate control over policy-making. Based on figures disclosed as a result of the US Lobbying Disclosure Act, the Center for Public Integrity concludes that the US arms industry in 2004 spent more than 37 million US\$ on lobbying (up from 27 million US\$ in 1998). Although figures are not available due to the absence of EU lobbying transparency rules, spending on arms industry lobbying in Brussels is fortunately still far less than in the US, but a clear and worrying trend in that direction is visible.**

- In the light of these concerns, there is an urgent need for effective transparency around the role of lobbying in EU decision-making. Campagne tegen Wapenhandel believes that the mechanisms proposed in the Commission's Green Paper are insufficient. Compulsory transparency standards should be established, with the obligation to disclose details about which interests are represented and amounts spent on lobbying. A voluntary reporting regime of lobbying activity is deemed to be unsuccessful as it would have no means to enforce proper and complete reporting.
- Campagne tegen Wapenhandel strongly believes that the public interest in disclosure and the benefits which lobbying transparency would have for the democratic process clearly outweigh arguments against it such as privacy and commercial confidentiality. People's faith in EU policy processes requires open and genuinely transparent reporting on how lobbying efforts are taking place.

## About Campagne tegen Wapenhandel

The Dutch Campaign against Arms Trade is a Dutch ngo that exists since 1998. From its two offices in Amsterdam and Groningen it specialises in researching, publishing and campaigning on arms industry and arms export issues. Central in our work is a lobby for strict adherence to the EU Code of Conduct on arms exports. More general we push for a human security rather than a military security approach to problems of conflict and violence. Campagne tegen Wapenhandel takes part in the European Network Against Arms Trade (ENAAAT) that brings together like-minded groups from a number of EU countries.

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[1] Frank Slijper, 'The emerging EU Military-Industrial complex – Arms industry lobbying in Brussels', TNI Briefing Series No 2005/1, Transnational Institute/Campagne tegen Wapenhandel, Amsterdam, 2005.

[2] E.g. the Group of Personalities in the Field of Security Research, LeaderSHIP 2015 and the European Advisory Group on Aerospace.