



9 June 2026

Welfare not Warfare: Europe-wide mobilisation on 14 June against EU and NATO rearmament plans

STOP REARM EUROPE — PRESS RELEASE

More than 800 civil-society organisations, trade unions and movements call for demonstrations in Brussels and across the continent — just days before EU heads of state negotiate the bloc's next long-term budget.

BRUSSELS, 9 June 2026 — On Sunday 14 June, Stop ReArm Europe, a Europe-wide coalition of more than 800 civil-society organisations, trade unions and social movements, in collaboration with the Belgian platform Stop Militarisation, will take to the streets of Brussels and dozens of other cities across Europe to oppose the European Union's and NATO's drive to rearm. Their main demand: public money must be spent on welfare, not warfare.

The mobilisation comes just days before EU leaders meet on 18–19 June for a European Council that will negotiate the Union's next seven-year budget — the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034 — which the coalition warns is being reshaped to channel tens of billions of euros to the arms industry.

In Brussels, demonstrators will gather at 3pm at Brussels-North station under the banner Welfare not Warfare, before marching towards the institutions driving the rearmament agenda. They will reconvene from 6pm in an open assembly at the Royal Library of Belgium (Keizerslaan 4/Boulevard de l'Empereur 4, Brussels) near Central-Station to plan the next steps of a continent-wide campaign.





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Organisers emphasise that 14 June is not an endpoint, but a common focal point, with demonstrations, public meetings and coordinated actions planned throughout the month in Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Finland, Germany, Italy and other countries.

A budget reshaped for war

The coalition opposes the EU's ReArm Europe plan, announced in March 2025, which set out to mobilise €800 billion for arms — money drawn away from healthcare, education, climate action and social protection. The coalition rejects the idea that Europe's security can be bought through a massive rearmament project that starves social budgets and escalates confrontation. The security concerns repeatedly highlighted by the EU, cannot in any case be resolved by rearmament.

The Commission's proposed next budget goes further still: it would allocate around €131 billion to the defence, security and space window of the new European Competitiveness Fund — five times the amount designated in the current budget. The jump to €131 billion is a net increase of at least €100 billion over seven years on the current defence and space envelope. That sum could instead fund the salaries of around 300,000 nurses, or build roughly half a million social homes — a quarter of the 2.25 million-unit housing shortfall the European Investment Bank identified for 2025 alone.

The reach extends beyond that headline figure: civilian programmes for research, mobility and cohesion would also be opened to military use. With the overall EU budget barely growing, the coalition warns, this amounts to a direct transfer from civilian to military spending. Campaigners warn that Europe is embarking on a permanent war economy that deepens conflicts rather than resolving them, will further fuel a global arms race, and increasingly embed militarisation into everyday life — from renewed conscription and expanded reserves to surveillance and the shrinking of democratic space.





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They also point to the growing influence of the arms lobby: by the coalition's count, the European Commission met arms-industry representatives 89 times on rearmament in 2025 (to October), against only 15 meetings with NGOs, trade unions or scientists on the same topics.

Borrowing for arms is also a poor economic decision. Military spending is capital- and import-heavy, so it creates fewer jobs per euro than almost any civilian alternative: studies of military versus civilian spending consistently find that money invested in care, education or housing generates 30–50% more jobs than the same sum spent on weapons. And borrowing to buy arms locks future generations into debt with no productive asset to show for it.

What the coalition is demanding

Stop ReArm Europe is calling on EU and national decision-makers to:

- **invest in healthcare, education, decent work, housing and a just climate transition — not in the militarisation of society;**
- **uphold international law and the UN Charter, and defend human and labour rights;**
- **prioritise dialogue and diplomacy over confrontation;**
- **invest in international solidarity and cooperation as the surest foundation for stable, secure societies; and**
- **pursue arms control and nuclear disarmament in order to guarantee peace and human security.**

Furthermore, the coalition is urging MEPs to refuse consent to any long-term EU budget that channels €131 billion into defence, security and space while squeezing social and cohesion funding.



Rearmament is sold to us as security, but the only thing it really secures are the profits of the weapon industries. A society with crumbling hospitals and a destabilised climate is not secure. Spending billions on arms while squeezing care, education and cohesion makes Europe poorer and more dangerous, not safer. On 14 June we are demanding a different set of priorities.

— Katerina Anastasiou, spokesperson for Stop ReArm Europe

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info@ipb.org



+49 (0) 30 1208 4549



Marienstr. 19-20 10117,
Berlin, Germany



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The coalition is inviting movements, organisations and elected representatives at European and national level to join the Brussels demonstration and organise actions in their own communities. Local initiatives can be registered on the Stop ReArm Europe campaign's action calendar, as part of a growing popular mobilisation demanding welfare, not warfare.

Notes to editors

- Stop ReArm Europe is a pan-European coalition of more than 800 civil-society organisations and movements, spanning peace, climate, debt, trade-union, development, health and human-rights sectors, campaigning to redirect resources “from war to peace” and towards human and common security.
- Brussels demonstration: Sunday 14 June, 15:00, departing Brussels-North station.
- Across Europe: decentralised demonstrations and actions are planned through June. A full calendar is available at <https://calendar.stoprearm.org/events/>
- The Belgian national mobilisation is organised by the Stop Militarisation Platform under the banner “For social justice, against war” (Pour la justice sociale, contre la guerre), backed by some 40 Belgian organisations including the FGTB/ABVV and CSC/ACV trade unions, CNCD-11.11.11, Greenpeace, DiEM25, Oxfam, Pax Christi, Vrede vzw, CNAPD and Vredesactie.
- The European Council of 18–19 June will discuss the next Multiannual Financial Framework on the basis of a “negotiation box” prepared by the Cypriot presidency. The Commission's proposal allocates €131 billion to the defence and space window of the European Competitiveness Fund, a fivefold increase on the 2021–2027 figure of roughly €26 billion.

Media contact

International Peace Bureau (IPB)

Email: info@ipb.org

Web: www.ipb.org

Issued by Stop ReArm Europe Coordination on behalf of its member organisations.

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info@ipb.org



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Marienstr. 19-20 10117,
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