

Advocacy Factsheet: Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty

Recommendations for Members of the European Parliament - September 2019



“The world looks to the EU for leadership on disarmament. There is a clear pathway to such leadership, namely, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It was adopted by 122 nations in 2017. Urge your government to join this new treaty and build collective security for the 21st century by banning nuclear weapons.”

—Beatrice Fihn, Director of ICAN,
2017 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate,
[addressing the EP’s Plenary](#), on 7 February 2018

WHAT IS THE CONTEXT?

Nine countries, including the UK and France, together possess some 14,000 nuclear weapons. The Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Germany also host US nuclear weapons and are prepared to use them in war as part of NATO. Most of today’s nuclear weapons are far more powerful than the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945. The blast, heat and radiation of a single nuclear bomb over a large city could kill and injure a million people. The countries with nuclear weapons are all modernising their arsenals in what looks increasingly like a new nuclear arms race. Furthermore, the US and Russia have now both abandoned the treaty banning medium-range nuclear missiles, which due to their range mainly threaten Europe.

Nuclear weapons are the only weapon of mass destruction not subject to a comprehensive ban despite their catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences. Now that legal gap is finally being filled by the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons \(TPNW\)](#). Negotiated at the UN in 2017, this new treaty is already well on its way to entering into force. EU members Austria and Ireland are leading supporters, and Sweden, Cyprus, Malta and the Netherlands took part in its negotiation. Yet most European countries currently oppose the prohibition of nuclear weapons due to their reliance on NATO extended deterrence.

WHY IS THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN TREATY IMPORTANT?

- The large majority of UN Member States which rejects nuclear arms is finally making nuclear weapons illegal. This challenges governments which claim to oppose nuclear weapons but nevertheless continue to rely on nuclear weapons, decade after decade.
- The steady progress of the nuclear weapons ban treaty sends a much-needed signal at a time of renewed nuclear dangers. The treaty addresses nuclear threats in Northeast Asia, the Middle East, South Asia, Europe and globally.
- Each ratification of the treaty meets the obligation to achieve nuclear disarmament in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, a step the nuclear powers refuse to take.
- While nuclear-armed nations quit the Iran-Deal, ended the INF-Treaty, and endanger the New START-agreement, the EU must step up for multilateral arms control and the TPNW. Too much is at stake for Europe to leave this topic to the nine states that hold the weapons.

DON'T BANK ON THE BOMB: PAX CHRISTI MEMBERS PROMOTE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Every year, PAX and ICAN analyse European and global financial investments in nuclear weapons production, maintenance, and their delivery vehicles. Since the adoption of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty in 2017, multiple banks such as KBC and Deutsche Bank have already adapted their investment policies, and some of the largest pension funds (e.g. the Dutch ABP and the Norwegian sovereign wealth fund) have divested from the nuclear weapons industry. **For more on Europe's investments in weapons of mass destruction, see: www.dontbankonthebomb.com.**



AS A MEP YOU CAN SUPPORT THE PROHIBITION AND ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS!

As a Member of the European Parliament you can contribute in important ways to a more secure, nuclear-free world:

- Join [ICAN's parliamentary pledge](#) in support of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. More than 1,000 parliamentarians across the EU have already taken the pledge. 73 MEPs are already on board!
- Build on the [European Parliament's resolution of 27 October 2016](#), in which it called on all EU Member States to supporting the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- Support resolutions in the context of the 2020 NPT Review Conference and ask EU institutions including DG ECHO and national authorities about their preparedness and humanitarian response capacity in case of nuclear detonations.
- Work with national parliaments to question EU Member States about their decision not to sign the treaty yet. In view of the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), emphasise the fact that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons complements the NPT precisely where it has failed—in abolishing nuclear weapons.
- Ask the European External Action Service about their plans for ending the stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament, one of the priorities of the new [EU agenda at the UN](#).



[Pax Christi International](#) is a Catholic peace movement with 120 member organisations worldwide promoting peace, respect for human rights, justice and reconciliation. The nuclear weapons ban treaty is one of our advocacy priorities and we are a member of ICAN. In 2020, our peace movement will celebrate its 75th anniversary in Hiroshima by visiting memorials of the 1945 atomic bombings, listening to witnesses of the survivors and addressing the need for disarmament.