Towards a nuclear weapons free Europe

American nuclear weapons still linger on European Union soil, i.e. in Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. At the same time, the Russian Federation has deployed nuclear-capable Iskander missile systems to the Kaliningrad oblast, which neighbours EU Member States Poland and Lithuania. France and the UK have decided or are preparing the modernisation of their nuclear weapons systems.

The announcement of the Trump administration to withdraw from the INF Treaty should be used as starting point for a new initiative towards total nuclear disarmament in Europe, the establishment of a regional Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) as requested by the UN General Assembly resolution 3472 B (1975).

Under NATO nuclear sharing and bilateral arrangements, an estimated 150 to 200 US-owned short-range nuclear freefall bombs, regarded as tactical or sub-strategic nuclear weapons, continue to be deployed in five NATO non-nuclear weapon states (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey), despite concerns raised in these countries, including in some of their parliaments, about the dangers, costs and insecurity posed by such weapons. The existence of these weapons, their possible use under NATO nuclear sharing arrangements by host nations, but also the French and British nuclear arsenals block an EU position on commonly joining the new Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

The position requiring the withdrawal of the American nuclear weapons on European soil, the British and French nuclear disarmament and the withdrawal of Russian nukes from the Western part of its country follows the principles of international nuclear disarmament, including the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty, and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons adopted in 2017, which will enter into legal force once 50 nations have signed and ratified it. The European Parliament has also adopted a resolution asking for ratification of the TPNW.

The presence of the American nuclear weapons in Europe, the Russian nuclear weapons and means of delivery in the Western part of their country and continued investments in British and French nuclear arsenals is inconsistent with the EGP's peace policy. Same goes for the presence of Russian tactical weapons and the stationing of nuclear-capable Iskander missiles only few kilometers away from the territory of EU Member States.

The establishment of a European nuclear-weapons free zone, the perspective of nuclear disarmament in Europe and EU28 joining the TPNW should be included in current discussions about the EU's security and defence policy. The EU should lead the example and make concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament of the continent. The mutual and simultaneous removal of all short-range, theatre and designated sub-strategic nuclear-weapon warheads, whether US or Russian French, or British, from European territory could contribute positively to creating the conditions for the construction of further nuclear-weapon-free zones, thereby contributing to the fulfilment of the non-proliferation and disarmament obligations contained in the NPT and, in the meantime, setting a precedent for further nuclear disarmament.

This would also prevent further arms race in Europe. This is not only crucial for providing security to EU Member States but also for the development of an effective Common Foreign and Security policy, with a credible arms control and non-proliferation policy. Without concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament on its own continent, the EU will remain a

poorly credible actor on international peace and security, in particular on global disarmament and non-proliferation and dossiers like the Iranian nuclear program, the North-Korean nuclear program and strategic disarmament between the US, Russia, but also China.

We, the European Greens, express our concerns about the EU's ability to speak up for a strategy of nuclear de-escalation and multilateral disarmament, including discussions with nuclear powers such as France, the UK, US, and Russia, and the host nations o Us tactical nukes, which determine nuclear insecurity on European soil. Their nuclear arsenals are to be part of the discussions on the establishment of a nuclear weapons free Europe.

We, the European Greens, ask for British and French nuclear disarmament and the withdrawal of all short-range, theatre and designated sub-strategic nuclear weapon warheads from European territory, which are preventing the international community from creating further nuclear-weapon-free zones. Such zones would help to fulfil the non-proliferation and disarmament obligations stated in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and, in the meantime, would set a precedent for further nuclear disarmament and security and stability in Europe and allow all EU Member States to join the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons.

We, the European Greens, ask the European Parliament, as well as the national parliaments to undertake actions concerning the removal of US and Russian nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament of nuclear weapons possessed by EU Member States, within the framework of the EU's foreign policy, consider international negotiations on further nuclear disarmament. This strategy also corresponds to the EU Global Strategy which should update and expand the 2003 EU Strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with a view to making the EU a driving force in strengthening and taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agreements.

We, the European Greens, ask the European External Action Service to play a greater role in diplomatic efforts towards disarmament, especially at the UN, by putting forward a timetable and initiatives for nuclear disarmament. The EU must speak with a single voice in forums like the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. In this perspective, we consider the Iran Nuclear Deal as a notable achievement for multilateral diplomacy, and for European diplomacy in particular.

We, the European Greens, refuse to reduce global security to military issues and urge the EU to develop a comprehensive and strategy to cope with other major causes of insecurity: economic crisis, armed conflict, arms exports, climate change, and resource scarcity.