

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

2018

flemish
peaceinstitute

***“The scientific research
of the Flemish Peace Institute
contributes to the reputation
of Flanders as a peace region,,***

Speaker Flemish Parliament

Parliamentary Forum
on Small Arms and Light Weapons

2 FOREWORD

8 Publications and advisory notes

**10 An evaluation of the Flemish Action Plan
to prevent violent radicalisation
and polarisation**

**16 Practising in the democratic conflict:
A look at the new citizenship final
attainment targets**

**26 Sure shot? New research by
the Flemish Peace Institute
into the regulation of target shooting
in Flanders**

**32 Military investments:
New challenges for the control of the export
of military equipment in Flanders**

**41 Evaluation Report
by the Scientific Council 2018**

FOREWORD



TINE DESTROOPER,
Director Flemish Peace Institute

THE WORLD IS CHANGING AT BREAKNECK SPEED.

Technological evolutions, global political developments, conflicts and polarisations are compelling and challenging policymakers, civil society organisations, researchers and citizens to remain critical and to stay collected.

That is what our work is all about: to join forces in looking for solutions to cope with these changes in this rapidly evolving world. The daily news proves that this is no easy matter. But that is precisely the reason why the work of an institute such as ours is so important. In essence, it concerns us, and requires us to always base what we think about peace on a sound understanding of our changing society.

Whether the issue is dealing with controversial subjects in class, evaluating policy on radicalisation, a better understanding of the safety risks of illegal firearms, or optimising the Flemish weapons export policy: we at the Peace Institute are fundamentally convinced that good policy is based on facts. As Timothy Snyder wrote in *On Tyranny*: “To abandon facts is to abandon freedom. If nothing is true, then no one can criticize power, because there is no basis upon which to do so.”

But we need more than just facts. Johan Galtung argued that “Peace appeals to the hearts; studies to the brain. Both are needed, indeed indispensable.” We carry out these studies, but we do not want to reduce them to purely technical analyses or boring reports. As newly appointed director, I examined together with my team how we can

directly and dynamically get through to our target audiences. Our aim was to generate broader support without sacrificing our high scientific standards. That is where there can sometimes be conflict: we communicate on the basis of facts and scientific research but we also want to tell a worthwhile story that contributes to a more peaceful society.

Populist post-truth and post-fact comments may become increasingly common, but in 2018, we showed the possibility of a nuanced story about peace and conflict based on facts, even on their most delicate aspects, such as polarisation or dealing with the memory of a violent conflict. In each case, we presented various perspectives, which enabled policymakers to make informed choices. These perspectives were often taken into account. Sometimes not.

We were not the only ones to have presented a critically informed opinion. The Flemish Peace Institute is admittedly unique as an independent and paraparliamentary research institute but there are more think tanks and study centres in the field of peace research than ever before. That is encouraging. And now, more than ever before, there are opportunities to share research findings on a vast scale, in the blink of an eye, through social media. My team and I strongly focused on this so that we could provide direct explanations on topical issues within our fields of expertise.

However, these same social media platforms also incur risks: people sometimes find incomplete or incorrect information more digestible than correctly nuanced information. In each case, we encouraged people to see such nuances and these various perspectives and to take them on board.

We did this in two important fields: the question on the possible government financing of military and dual-use research, on the one hand, and the regulations on shooting sport in Flanders on the other. Not only did we show how complex the subject matter is in each case, but we also made specific proposals to optimise policy.

In addition, we published an important book targeting practitioners in education. In this regard, we provided theory-based solutions that could be used as guidelines to deal with controversy and polarisation in the classroom. Addressing this new target group enabled us to be broadly socially relevant without losing sight of our focus on policy targeted research in the process. This is one of our institute's achievements of which I, as director, am exceptionally proud.

Besides the more direct communication and expansion of our target audience, I also found it important to concentrate on internationalisation. In addition to the traditional focus on Flanders, we used our annual advice and fact sheets included in the Government of Flanders's annual report on the foreign arms trade to focus explicitly on influencing other policy levels, such as Europe, in 2018. We discussed the achievements of Flanders and how they can contribute to forming a positive European policy, as well

as the sore points in the Flemish policy and how these can be put right by more European cooperation and thorough monitoring.

With the concluding conference of our research project on illegal firearms markets in Europe, we also successfully increased our own international visibility, and, consequently, also that of Flanders as peace region and that of the Flemish Parliament as important actor in this field. This conference brought policy makers and practitioners from all over Europe to the Flemish Parliament and it was reported on internationally by The Guardian and The Washington Post, for example.

Other initiatives such as cooperation with the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons also brought members of parliaments from all over the world to the Flemish Parliament, and our participation in international events enabled us to present our research to the highest levels of the United Nations in New York and to academic institutes in the whole of the EU and the US.

Finally, 2018 was a year of growth for our institute. We were awarded various research projects and were able to recruit more people. This, in turn, enabled us to diversify our target groups and the topics on which we work without losing sight of the expertise that we have developed. This is important because both the great strength and the enormous risk of contemporary science lie in thorough, in-depth specialisation. This also applies to our work: we bring together insights in specific fields where empirical knowledge is both rare and essential. We cannot get bogged down by making our focus too narrow, though. That is why we committed ourselves to expanding our expertise in 2018 and, as experts, to join in drawing the bigger picture surrounding peace and the prevention of conflict.

The appreciation for our work and our unique expertise shows that peace research means a great deal in today's world. However, in order to be influential, peace research must be spread by a broad network – not necessarily by like-minded people but by individuals and groups that are convinced of the importance of an informed debate on peace. This annual report sheds light on the situation behind the scenes of how we do this as a research institute at the Flemish Parliament, for example, by encouraging elected members of parliament to call on us so that we can support them in making informed decisions.

That is also our goal for 2019: to continue growing, developing our international scope and furnishing such debates, to address new audiences, both in Flanders and far beyond, while taking into account various perspectives and furthering the fundamental ambition to contribute to a non-violent society, both at home and elsewhere.

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Tine Destrooper

Director Flemish Peace Institute





PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

17/04/2018

Triggering Terror: Illicit gun markets and firearms acquisition by terrorist networks in Europe, Nils Duquet (Ed.)

18/04/2018

Firearms acquisition by terrorists in Europe. Research findings and policy recommendations of project SAFTE, Nils Duquet & Kevin Goris

21/09/2018

Omgaan met controverse en polarisatie (Dealing with controversy and polarisation), Maarten Van Alstein, published by Pelckmans Pro

REPORTS

15/06/2018

Overheidssteun voor dual use en militaire O&O. Uitdagingen en implicaties voor het Vlaams beleid (Government support for dual use and military R&D. Challenges and implications for Flemish policy), Diederik Cops

06/09/2018

SIPRI Yearbook 2018 – Summary in Dutch

08/11/2018

Een schot in de roos? Uitdagingen inzake de regulering van de schietsport in Vlaanderen (Sure Shot? Challenges regarding the regulation of shooting sport in Flanders), Nils Duquet

21/11/2018

Policy brief: Versterking van de wapenuitvoercontroles door betere informatie-uitwisseling (Policy brief: Strengthening arms export controls through better information exchange), Diederik Cops

ARTICLES

10/2018

1918 en het voortdurende geweld (1918 and the continuing violence), in Getuigen tussen geschiedenis en herinnering, Maarten Van Alstein

10/2018

Front 14-18. The experience of battle in WWI and the fascist culture of violence in post-war Germany, in Getuigen tussen geschiedenis en herinnering, Maarten Van Alstein

07/11/2018

Ingehaald door het heden? Een kanttekening bij de eeuwherdenking van de Eerste Wereldoorlog in Vlaanderen (Overshadowed by the present? A side note about the commemoration of the First World War in Flanders), in Streven Web, Maarten Van Alstein

ADVISORY NOTES

15/06/2018

Advice on the updating of the IWT guidelines on Flemish policy regarding support for dual use and military R&D

08/11/2018

Advice on limiting the safety risks associated with sport shooting in Flanders

04/12/2018

Advice on the Flemish foreign arms trade 2017

ACTIVITIES

24/04/2018

Presentation **'Annual report 2017'**
Flemish Parliament, Brussels

05/06/2018

Presentation **'Annual report 2017'**
Committee on Foreign Policy, Brussels

27/09/2018

Lunch talk Peace Institute
Department Foreign Affairs Flanders, Brussels

7/10/2018

Opening exhibition **'The graves are nice this time of year'** Jimmy Kets
CC Sint-Niklaas, Sint-Niklaas

14/11/2018

Presentation **'Righting victim participation in transitional justice'**
Columbia University, New York

17/11/2018

Opening visitor centre Flemish Parliament, Brussels

18/11/2018

Contribution **'117th annual meeting'**
American Anthropological Association, San José

7/12/2018

Workshop **'Peacebuilding'** USCIA & University of Antwerp, Antwerp

19/12/2018

Contribution discussion **'Right to living in freedom'**, Mortsel



An evaluation of the Flemish Action Plan to prevent violent radicalisation and polarisation

Researchers Lore Colaert and Yamina Berrezzeg, together with Kevin Goris, evaluate the action plan on the prevention of “violent radicalisation”. This Flemish policy was developed in 2015 within the context of the recent terrorist attacks on European territory and the departure of mostly young Flemish citizens to Syria and Iraq to fight there on the side of extremist groups. The Government of Flanders asked the Flemish Peace Institute to evaluate its action plan against “violent radicalisation”. This is a particularly fascinating challenging exercise at the same time. Evaluating the policy approach to extremism is exceedingly important yet delicate. These policy measures target people in vulnerable situations, affect their privacy, and can have implications on a security and safety level as well as unintended consequences, such as group stigmatisation.



YAMINA BERREZZEG & LORE COLAERT

INTERVIEW BY

BRIGITTE HERREMANS & NAOMI OWUSU ANSAH

Firstly: what is the meaning of “radicalisation”?

Lore: European policy makers coined the concept after the attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005) to gain insight into the precise process of how an individual, who grew up in this community, is capable of committing a terrorist act. Since then, the policy has focused strongly on the individual and his or her ideology, whereas the importance of the societal context as a breeding ground for terrorism has moved into the background. In the meantime, the concept has become a catch-all concept to describe much broader societal challenges, such as conflicts surrounding religious practices at school. For all these reasons, it has become a loaded concept. We use the term as precisely as possible to explain the processes of socialisation towards extremism, which can manifest themselves in terrorism.

What are the causes of (violent) radicalisation?

Lore: Scientists do not agree on the matter. Some scientists emphasise the important role of extremist ideologies while others focus more on social breeding grounds as an important factor. They do agree, however, on the fact that many dynamics play a role in radicalisation processes: grievances, networks, extremist ideologies and opportunities to take action.

Yamina: These diverse causes of extremism also play a role at different levels. At the individual level, an identity crisis, or a need for sensation or status can play a role in a young person's life, for example. At group level, relatives, a loved one or a recruiter, for example, can be important factors in a process of radicalisation.

Finally, at the societal level, attacks in Europe or the refugee crisis can be examples of why individuals become radicalised.

What are the challenges one encounters in an evaluation of these types of programme?

Yamina: Evaluating counter-radicalisation policies confronts us with a number of methodological challenges. For example, the lack of consensus on what the problem of “radicalisation” is, what its causes are and what the purpose of a policy approach must be, complicates our task. It is also difficult to demonstrate the impact of intervention because it involves measuring a “non-event”. As if we would be able to prove that a terrorist attack did not take place as a result of current policies. Even if one can observe a change – such as a drop in the number of individuals who leave for Syria and Iraq to join terrorist groups – then one is still left with the question as to whether such a change can be attributed to the policy being conducted and not to other personal, social or societal circumstances.

Lore: The structure of the Flemish Action Plan (2015) also poses some extra challenges. The objective of the action plan is clear: “detect young people and young adults who may be at risk of being radicalised as early as possible in order to prevent them from dropping out of society.” However, it is not always clear in what way all the measures contribute to this objective. In addition, the plan contains both newly implemented projects, and ‘older’ measures that are part of existing policies. Some of the measures are performed by other actors in the field, such as civil society organisations or local

authorities. In addition, other, similar initiatives have not been included in the Action Plan. Nonetheless, this complex structure reflects the typical nature of prevention policy. The ratio between general policy, such as integration policy on one hand, and policy related to the prevention of extremism on the other, is complicated. The action plan also acknowledges that working towards an inclusive society with equal opportunities for all is the most primary form of prevention. At the same time, it also emphasizes that additional measures are needed for specific target groups.

As is the case elsewhere, there is a proliferation of initiatives in Flanders to combat extremism. Why does it happen so quickly now?

Lore: The Flemish Action Plan was drafted in 2015. There was a great sense of urgency in Flemish politics because hundreds of young Belgians had left for Syria and Iraq. And on top of that, there were growing concerns on the question: what are we going to do if those individuals return?

Yamina: A few cities had already been examining how they could deal with the issue. Local authorities can often respond faster to the challenges they face in their city and can set up partnerships more easily. The mayors of Vilvoorde, Antwerp, Maaseik and Mechelen, for example, sounded the alarm bell and were the first to develop a guidebook for municipal councils.

Lore: Nonetheless, there were no ready-made answers. Among researchers as well, it took some time before we found

our way in this complex field. At the Peace Institute, we were already conducting research on urban youth violence and thus gradually shifted our focus to extremism.

Where did the request for an evaluation of the Flemish Action Plan come from?

Yamina: As was the case in other regions, the Flemish policy was initially rather experimental. Many initiatives originated locally or were copied and pasted from other countries. However, it is not always clear why certain measures are seen as “good practices”. As a matter of fact, not much research has yet been done on the effectiveness of these measures.

Lore: The sense of urgency diminished over time and provided an opportunity to start evaluating what was done so far. We were instructed to evaluate the Flemish Action Plan in 2018. Ideally, however, researchers are involved from the moment that the policy is designed so that they can set up indicators that make it possible to evaluate the policy at a later stage. This makes the policy more targeted right from the start.

What do we learn from experiences in other countries? From practice to evidence-based research.

Yamina: Although knowledge and information are exchanged both at a national and international level, we still find ourselves in the position that not much is known about “what really works”. Yet it is possible to measure the effectiveness of social prevention step by step. For example, researchers Veerman and van Yperen (2008) developed an “effectiveness ladder” for their research on intervention in the

youth care sector. According to these authors, you can gradually learn more about current practices and their effects through practice-driven research. Researchers should therefore identify, explicate and empirically study practitioners' theoretical assumptions, in order to gradually prove the effectiveness of an intervention. In other words, practice-driven research must close the gap between "knowing nothing" and "knowing everything". We use this effectiveness ladder in our evaluative framework.

How did you develop your evaluative framework?

Yamina: First, we distinguished between the programme and the project levels. Our research has an hourglass model, which means that one first does a theoretical scan of the entire action plan; how coherently are the measures related to the overall aim, what is the policy relevance and to what extent did policymakers rely on scientific insights? We then perform an in-depth examination of a number of policy domains from the action plan: local policies, individual trajectories, youth work and education. We also apply an hourglass structure within these in-depth studies by looking at the programme level, for example: what role is to be played by youth work in the counter-radicalisation policy, what role does the sector see for itself and what does the literature say? After that, we focus on specific projects within each field, such as the youth work projects concerning 'positive identity development' or educational projects on dealing with polarisation at school. In this study, we always combine the question of effectiveness with the question of desirability.

ACTIVITIES RADICALISATION

26/03/2018

Workshop **'Extremism for teachers and pupils at secondary school'**, Oudenaarde

18/04/2018

Meeting steering group **'Towards a roadmap for monitoring and evaluation of local and community-based PVE policies in Belgium'** Open Society Foundations, Brussels

28/05/2018

Contribution discussion **'The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism on Belgian policies to counter terrorism and extremism'** Egmont Institute, Brussels

10/12/2018

Multi-stakeholders seminar **'The role of monitoring and evaluation methods on boosting the effectiveness of PVE measures'** Open Society Foundations & Egmont Institute, Brussels

ACTIVITIES REMEMBRANCE EDUCATION

04/03/2018

Exhibition **'The art of war: artists' talk'** i.c.w. Kazerne Dossin, Mechelen

18/05/2018

Presentation **'Remembering the Spanish Civil War'** i.c.w. Kultuurfaktorij De Monty & Vredescentrum, Antwerp

09/11/2018

'Eleventh November lecture 2018 with Kader Abdolah' i.c.w. Westtoer, Ypres

Lessons learned?

Lore: We can already draw a number of lessons from our current study. First and foremost, it is important to think of evaluation and to involve researchers from the moment the policy is set up.

Yamina: Moreover, as has been said above, we must make a distinction between evaluating a programme, such as an entire action plan and evaluating a specific intervention or a project. In this regard, it is important to strictly define the scope of the evaluation. Not everything can be evaluated: it is a long process which is both time-consuming and costly. The smaller the scope, the more in-depth your research will be.

Lore: Researchers and authorities can join forces in providing frameworks to those implementing the projects. Governments can use those frameworks as well to select, support and evaluate projects. We can develop these frameworks from scratch, but we can also use the existing frameworks as a basis. For example, an organisation that supports parents in dealing with extremism uses an existing educational support framework to evaluate their project. Writing down good practices takes a substantial amount of time but because of the involvement of researchers, knowledge on how and why interventions work will strongly increase.







Practising in the democratic conflict

A look at the new citizenship attainment targets

In 2018, the Flemish Parliament adopted new curricular attainment targets for the first years of secondary education. New targets for

the higher grades are on the agenda for the coming years. Observers of Flemish education were not surprised that citizenship competences figure prominently in the new attainment targets. The demand for more citizenship education has only grown stronger over recent years. This not only relates to recurring concerns about young people's attachment to democratic values. There is also a broadly shared sense in the educational field that societal conflicts and tensions are increasingly prevalent. This supports the idea that young people's skills to deal with societal conflicts and tensions must be strengthened.

KEVIN GORIS & MAARTEN VAN ALSTEIN

In this essay, we take a closer look at the new attainment targets for citizenship education. Our starting point is the research that the Flemish Peace Institute carries out on the intersection between peace education, conflict transformation and citizenship education. In 2018 this led to a book on dealing with controversy and polarisation in the classroom. Here we pose the question to what extent the new attainment targets provide leads for teachers and schools to deal with societal conflicts and work on controversial issues.

An explosive context

Stories about conflicts and tensions in the classroom have been circulating widely in the educational community over the past few years. For example, they tell of pupils who act in such a provocative or resentful manner that they stir up chaos in the classroom; of confrontations between groups of pupils; or of arguments that become so bitter that they degenerate into foul language. Migration, symbols of belief, gender or topical political quarrels are the controversial issues that often raise the temperature in the classroom. In other words, the explosive topics that easily lead to furious arguments and tense situations on Twitter and television can also, at any point in time, take the classroom in a conflictual grip.

In view of increasing societal tensions, it is not at all strange that the question of how to deal with these types of heated situations have been put on the Flemish educational agenda. There is indeed no lack of fuel for conflict in our society, which, hectically driven by globalisation, economic transformation and digitalisation, is changing at breakneck speed. Not only does this provide

ACTIVITIES ON REMEMBRANCE EDUCATION

15/06/2018

Keynote **'Learning from the past'**
Study Day Holocaust education,
Camp Westerbork, Hooghalen

27/09/2018

Presentation **'Learning from the past?'**
Strategic thinking day Nationaal Comité
4 en 5 mei, Amsterdam

7/10/2018

Contribution discussion
**'Commemorating in Flanders and
the Netherlands'** De Brakke Grond,
Amsterdam

15/10/2018

Contribution discussion **'Recollection of
cultures in conversation'** Embassy of
Belgium, Berlin

ACTIVITIES ON POLARISATION AND CONTROVERSY

30/01/2018

Keynote **'Polarisation and controversy'**
Study Day Stedelijk Onderwijs
Antwerpen, Antwerp

21/06/2018

Presentation **'Dealing with controversy
and polarisation in the classroom'**
Study Day on polarisation as enrichment
and threat at Kazerne Dossin, Mechelen

21/09/2018

Book presentation **'Dealing with
controversy and polarisation in the
classroom'** Flemish Parliament,
Brussels

17/10/2018

Presentation **'Controversy and
polarisation in the classroom'** Culture
Days CANON Cultuurcel, Antwerp

22/10/2018

Presentation **'Controversy and
polarisation in the classroom'** Study
Day Fund Aurore Ruyffelaere on
citizenship and remembrance
education, Brussels

31/10/2018

Debate **'Education 2.0: Challenges
for the education of tomorrow'**
Teachers' day Book Fair, Antwerp

17/12/2018

Introduction **'Dealing with diversity and
controversy in times of polarisation'**
Onderwijsnetwerk Antwerpen, Antwerp

opportunities towards progress and faster communication, it also creates all kinds of conflict and tensions. In fast-changing societies, questions regarding identity, recognition and power surface much more quickly. These issues are inspired not only by needs such as the need for a sense of belonging or for appreciation, they are also fuelled by political emotions such as unease, indignation and anger. That is why they lend themselves, *par excellence*, to intense arguments and agitation.

This is not a new phenomenon. In the 19th and 20th centuries – also periods of intense modernisation – our society was marked by cleavages that were at least as acute: reactionary versus modern, catholic versus free-thinking, capital versus labour and Flemish versus French-speaking. Polarisation may be a term that everyone is talking about these days, but it is in fact an age-old phenomenon. Nonetheless, the drastic changes of the past decades have caused trusted pacification models – such as pillarisation and an array of social consultation institutions – to come under increasing pressure.

The consequence of this is that we are all searching for adequate ways to deal with new societal cleavages and sources of conflict. That is probably also the reason for the ever louder call for more citizenship education. After all, democracy is an experiment that needs to be repeated every day in order to succeed, and this requires a constantly renewed commitment from society. This demands not only the commitment of as many citizens as possible, but also attention to new generations of children and young people. After all, we are not born as democratic citizens; it is something we must become. And in a society as complex as ours,

it does not come as a surprise that policy-makers look at the education system to fulfil this task.

Dialogue and conflict in the new attainment targets

This brings us to the new attainment targets for citizenship education as adopted by decree by the Flemish Parliament on 5 December 2018. Democratic citizenship is listed as one of the sixteen key competences formulated in the new system of educational goals. These key competences, which are specified in numerous attainment targets, are not explicitly linked to concrete courses. The idea is that school boards, school teams and teachers have the freedom to combine attainment targets in different ways. In addition, a number of the listed attainment targets are “transversal”. This means that these targets must be achieved “in conjunction with substantive attainment targets of various key competences” (Decree, article 3.3°).

In this way, the new educational goals make it possible for teachers and schools to work on citizenship education in a creative and innovative way. At the same time, this approach poses numerous challenges to school teams because, in practice, they will often require a new way of thinking and organising.

As far as content is concerned, the “key citizenship competences” are specified in a number of attainment targets. These are listed under seven “building blocks” (see table in the frame below). The subject field covered in this way is rather extensive. In our search for leads on how the new attainment targets provide opportunities to deal with societal conflicts and work on contro-

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THE NEW ATTAINMENT TARGETS

In the new educational goals, the various aspects of citizenship competences are listed under various building blocks. Pupils in Flanders are expected to be able to do the following:

1. Explain the dynamics and layered nature of (their own) identities;
2. Deal with diversity in living and working together;
3. Enter into dialogue with one another in an informed way;
4. Actively participate in society, taking into account the rights and obligations of everyone within the constitutional state;
5. Critically approach the mutual influence between societal developments, and their impact on the (global) society and the individual;
6. Explain democratic decision-making at local, national and international levels;
7. Understand democratic principles and democratic culture within the framework of a modern constitutional state.

versial issues, we take a particular look at building blocks 2 and 3 ('dealing with diversity' and 'entering into dialogue with one another in an informed way').

The explanatory memorandum accompanying the decree provides a good starting point to explore exactly what the government expects in this regard. The memorandum states that every society consists of groups of people who differ from one another socially, culturally, politically and economically. Given this diversity, it is important that citizens agree upon a set of principles and arrangements that regulate public life. This requires not only an understanding of how society functions, also basic skills such as cooperation, constructive thinking and, importantly, positively dealing with (values) conflicts, are indispensable.

To specify the latter requirement, attainment target 7.5 stipulates that "the pupils use strategies to arrive at constructive solutions for conflict situations". In this regard, the memorandum explains that it is best to use the *de facto* school situation and pupils' daily living experiences as the starting point to work on such skills. The second element that we want to highlight here is the importance that is attached to the informed dialogue. According to attainment target 7.7, pupils are expected to be able to substantiate their opinions on societal topics and trends with reliable information and valid arguments.

The classroom as a democratic laboratory

The above makes clear that the new attainment targets regarding citizenship education place great importance on practising democratic discussions in the classroom context. Why is this a good thing? Quite a few arguments in favour of this can be found in the pedagogic literature ranging from the early 20th century founder of the democratic school, John Dewey, to Gert Biesta's contemporary arguments on learning democracy. The idea here is that democratic citizenship education must be conceived as *practice*, and not merely as knowledge that is to be conveyed.

Too much of a one-sided focus on the latter can in fact manifest itself as a restricted form of transferring values. In this way, pupils do, for example, learn about the rights and obligations that they have as citizens or about the political system and democratic institutions. However, the opportunity to develop their own democratic voice is in danger of being side-stepped. Thus this approach incurs the danger of uncritical socialisation in existing political and social relations.

Does this mean that the teacher and, by extension, the school, may not or need not provide any normative leads? Definitely not. Opting for democratic citizenship education is not value-neutral and is exactly what prompts the school to encourage pupils to develop democratic values and standards. Teachers use the pedagogic project of their school to propagate democratic principles such as freedom, equality and social involvement, and they safeguard the confines thereof.

However, pupils should simultaneously be encouraged and enabled to critically reflect on the framework presented to them. In this way, they can apply it to themselves and the broader society and enter into dialogue about it. In sum, they should experience democracy at school and enhance their skills to put democratic values and standards into practice. In essence, this means “practise what you preach”: the classroom and the school should not just be a mere hatch through which democratic values and standards are handed out but also a place where democracy can be practised, a “democratic laboratory”.

An open classroom climate is essential to achieve this. This entails that pupils are encouraged to voice their opinions, even if these opinions diverge from those of the teacher or other pupils. In this way, they get to know each other in their similarities and differences, and are encouraged to become engaged citizens. Teachers help create this kind of open classroom climate by encouraging discussion. By pointing out various aspects of a certain problem, they furthermore promote an atmosphere of multi-perspectivity. When these conditions are met and pupils actively experience an open classroom climate, research shows their trust in political institutions and in fellow citizens will increase. An open classroom climate creates a pedagogical environment in which societal issues and political conflicts can be constructively addressed and explored. This is important as these issues and conflicts inevitably influence pupils’ day-to-day experiences and living environment.

A space for conflict

The new attainment targets seem to endorse this approach to citizenship education. This is shown, for example, by the importance placed on dialogue. What does all of this mean for how schools and teachers can deal with societal conflicts and work on controversial subjects? To explore that question, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at the deliberative approach to democratic education that seems to underpin the new attainment targets. This approach sees democracy as more than merely balancing various interests and aggregating citizens’ votes. Deliberative theorists emphasize the importance of citizens explaining and giving each other reasons for their opinions and preferences. This means that they constantly must talk to one another – deliberate – about what is good for society.

All of this is linked to a few rules. Opinions are preferentially substantiated by reasonable and valid argument, whereas sophisms, personal attacks or manipulation are shunned. Today, a deliberative approach to democracy is quite popular in debates on how western democracy can be saved from the crisis it currently seems to face. There is indeed a great deal that speaks in favour of deliberative democracy. Talking to each other in a reasonable way and reaching decisions through careful deliberation: in times of fake news and polarisation, an ‘old-school’ approach can suddenly sound amazingly fresh.

Nonetheless, some caution is warranted when we want to translate insights from deliberative theory to the reality of the classroom. Not so much regarding the central basic



principles: how can anyone be *against* a reasonable exchange of opinions and ideas? The question rather is whether a reasonable and substantiated dialogue is achievable, and even desirable, in all classroom situations. Firstly, if we expect *all* pupils to (be able to) speak the language of deliberative dialogue, situations may arise where a number of them may feel uncomfortable or even find it difficult to find their own voice on topical societal questions. This is of course an issue if teachers want to establish an *inclusive* classroom climate. Some pupils may feel ill at ease because the requirements of deliberative dialogue diverge from the manner of speech they experience in their home situations, while others may simply prefer to express themselves in other ways than rational dialogue. In class discussions, these pupils may either withdraw and keep silent or, on the other hand, express themselves in strong or even conflictual language because they feel disempowered or indignant as ‘their’ voice is not heard.

This brings us to a second note. From Twitter conversations to the family table: often, in practice, discussions on societal issues do not exactly follow the pattern of expectations of reasonable dialogue. On the contrary, they can be quite fiery. Politics is, after all, more than the rational exchange of valid arguments and the search for pragmatic solutions. Politics always has a symbolic and emotional stake. It should, therefore, not surprise that discussions on politics often result in heated differences of opinion and conflict. Most teachers know from experience that in the classroom, too, politics and societal question are seldom raised in a purely rational manner. It goes without saying that it is noble and necessary to teach as many young people as possible how they can engage in reasonable dialogue and substantiate their opinions. Whether that also means that teachers must avoid political conflicts in the classroom, however, is a different matter. Emotionally charged controversies are inherent to politics. Anyone who hopes to take the edge off matters by ignoring or suppressing conflicts runs a high risk of being disappointed in the longer run.

No democracy without controversy

How teachers deal with all of this has a bearing on how democratic citizenship education will play out in classrooms. Importantly, the new attainment targets on citizenship education provide a number of leads to address the abovementioned issues of inclusion and conflict.

Firstly, regarding the latter, the targets not only place an emphasis on dialogue and deliberation, they also mention the importance of conflict resolution. More specifically, the targets mention that in order to live together in diversity, it is important that pupils “learn to constructively deal with (value) conflicts”. This mention of conflict resolution as a part of citizenship education is important. Nonetheless, as we have indicated above, it is advisable to go beyond merely ‘managing’ and ‘solving’ conflicts. Constructively dealing with the conflictual nature of politics also entails that controversial issues are not side-stepped but that they are given their proper place in lessons and class discussions.

In political-philosophical terms, the emphasis here shifts from a *deliberative* paradigm to an *agonistic* approach. The focus is not so much on rational dialogue but on how we deal with – unavoidable – political conflicts. If there is no controversy, there is no democracy, writes American pedagogue Diana Hess. The idea is that pupils, as long as they respect the fundamental principles and arrangements that regulate public life in a democratic society, ought to be able to explore identities and ideological conflicts in the classroom. This also means that pupils feel that there is space for them to critically question existing power relations in society. None of this is easy. Nonetheless, creating such a democratic classroom is important if we want pupils to feel that their voice counts, also if it clashes with those of others.

Secondly, with regards to the issue of an inclusive classroom, the attainment targets provide ample opportunities to use other methods than a ‘traditional’ dialogue to work on controversial issues. The transversal character of the new system of educational goals makes it possible, for example, to look for links between the targets regarding citizenship education on the one hand and targets regarding ‘cultural awareness and cultural expression’ on the other. Because the language of artistic pedagogies is multi-layered and broadens horizons, it offers ample opportunities for teachers and pupils to work on controversial and culturally delicate issues. Cultural education is especially promising in classrooms where there are a number of pupils who prefer to express themselves artistically instead of using the techniques of the dialogue to reflect upon themselves and the world. Besides these artistic methods, promising are also the techniques of philosophical conversations with pupils. In these sessions, pupils explore and reflect upon their world views in all openness and freedom.

Conclusion?

Given the importance that they place on classroom conversations and an open classroom climate, the new Flemish attainment targets on citizenship education are clearly inspired by a deliberative approach to democracy. That, in itself, is good and valuable. However, if we want teachers to make classrooms as inclusive as possible and deal constructively with the unavoidable conflictual nature of democratic politics, we need to broaden our horizon. Importantly, the new attainment targets provide a number of leads to do exactly that. The fact that the targets require pupils to engage in constructive conflict resolution is important. And also the possibility of transversal links between citizenship and cultural competences offer ample opportunities to work creatively and innovatively on controversial issues. Thus the new attainment targets provide numerous leads for teachers to work with their pupils on the many controversial questions with which our society is currently grappling, and to let them practise in the democratic conflict.

“Belgian-made firearms have throughout history been used in almost every armed conflict around the world in one way or another. What’s new in the Yemen conflict however, is that new firearms have been found ,,”

Diederik Cops
Researcher



Sure shot?

New research by the Flemish Peace Institute into the regulation of target shooting in Flanders

The Flemish Decree on Shooting Sport celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2018. That is why the Speaker of the Flemish Parliament asked the Peace Institute to map

possible security risks related to target shooting¹ in Flanders and to provide advice on mitigation measures. We have analysed the existing legislation, procedures and practices. In addition, we held interviews with the actors and stakeholders involved, such as the three authorised Flemish shooting sport federations, “Sport Vlaanderen” (Flemish government administration for sports), the provincial and federal weapons service(s), the federal police, “Wapenunie” (interest group for arms dealers and shooting ranges) and the Actieve “Verdediging der Wapenliefhebbers” (interest group for firearms possessors) to identify the possible risks. We have presented the study to the Committee on Sports of the Flemish Parliament on 8 November 2018.

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¹ Target shooting in the broad sense refers to the firing at targets with rifles, pistols, air guns, and shotguns. Both sport and recreational shooting are considered as target shooting.

Need for detailed figures

Our study concludes that the system of sport shooting (as developed in the Flemish Decree on Sport Shooting) works rather well. In general, the shooting associations adequately fulfil their important task. The safety rules on the use of firearms when engaging in target shooting are well followed. This can be illustrated by the limited number of accidents on the shooting range. Furthermore, the Peace Institute observed that the actors involved know little about how the arms belonging to sport shooters and recreational shooters are used in incidents of violence outside the shooting range. Since no detailed figures on violent incidents involving firearms in Flanders are currently available, we advise the government to systematically gather and analyse information on the frequency, nature and context of violent crimes involving firearms. This will allow the government to develop its future policy priorities based on reliable data.

Increased interest in target shooting

The Central Weapons Register has at least 107,000 firearms registered for sport and recreational shooting. This means that target shooting is the most important reason for possessing firearms in Flanders. The membership of the three authorised shooting associations has risen to over 30,000 over the past few years. The study shows that various actors interviewed believe that the recent increase in the popularity of target shooting may also be related to the terrorist shooting incidents of the past few years. In the wake of such incidents, the provincial weapon services and the authorised shooting associations in Flanders received more questions about the possibilities of lawful

ACTIVITIES ON ARMS TRADE

31/01/2018

Presentation **'From understanding to action: Terrorist access to firearms in the EU'** Seminar on the UN Action plan for combating Small and Light Weapons, Paris

03/04/2018

Presentation **'Project SAFTE: Studying the acquisition of firearms by terrorist networks in Europe'** CEPOL, Madrid

17/04/2018

Closing conference project SAFTE 'Terrorists access to illegal firearms markets in Europe' Flemish Parliament, Brussels

16/05/2018

Presentation **'Project SAFTE: Terrorist access to illicit gun markets in Europe'** UNODC Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Vienna

17/05/2018

Presentation 'Developing policy actions to counter firearms acquisition by terrorists in the EU' Public Policy Exchange, Brussels

24/05/2018

Presentatie **'Project SAFTE: Firearms acquisition by terrorists in Europe'** Interfederal Committee for Combating Illegal Arms Trade

24/05/2018

Presentation **'The Belgian arms trade'** UPV department, Geraardsbergen

28/05/2018

Presentation **'Project SAFTE: Firearms acquisition by terrorists in Europe'** 9th Regional meeting of SALW Commissions, Tirana

15/06/2018

Presentation **'The legal framework of shooting sport in Flanders'** i.c.w. Shooting Range Zilverberg, Kontich

18/06/2018

Presentation **'Firearms acquisition by terrorists in the EU: Research findings from project SAFTE'** Commission for Counterterrorism, European Parliament, Brussels

22/06/2018

Presentation '**Terrorist access to converted firearms in Europe: Research findings from project SAFTE**' i.c.w. Small Arms Survey & the permanent representation of France at the UN seminar "Legal loopholes and terrorism: Converted firearms in Europe and beyond", New York

3/10/2018

Presentation '**Firearms acquisition by terrorists in the EU: Research findings from project SAFTE**' European Network of Forensic Science Institutes, Copenhagen

4/10/2018

Presentation '**Recent changes to gun law**' Study day Belgian gun law, Brussels

8/11/2018

Presentation report '**Sure Shot?**' and **advice on shooting in Flanders** Sports Committee Flemish Parliament, Brussels

9/11/2018

Presentation '**Proliferation of small and light weapons: Problem and approach**' Hogere Studies voor Veiligheid en Defensie, Brussels

10/11/2018

Debate '**Armament - for peace's sake?**' Commemoration Committee Camille Huysmans & Vredescentrum, Antwerp

13/11/2018 & 18/11/2018

Presentation '**Arms flows and terrorism in the Middle East and the EU**' Seminar 'Preventing terrorists from obtaining weapons', UN Security Council resolution 2370, New York

11/12/2018

Presentation '**Legal and illegal arms trade in Belgium**' i.c.w. Free University of Brussels during lessons 'Reasonably Quirky', Brussels

arms possession and membership of shooting clubs. The Peace Institute therefore advises the associations to ensure that shooting clubs conduct good intake interviews with potential members and actively follow up on new members. Furthermore, we advise the provincial arms services to provide a suspensive condition when issuing new arms licences to recreational shooters to the effect that such licences can be revoked immediately if the new shooter cannot prove that they have completed the mandatory number of shooting rounds per year.

Sport shooting and recreational shooting

Anyone interested in possessing firearms must comply with a number of safety conditions to do so. For example, as is only logical, people who have been convicted of certain criminal acts may not buy any firearms. People who practise shooting sport in Flanders can pursue their hobby in two ways by using firearms that require a licence: as part of the "sport shooting" system (with a sport shooter's licence) as laid down in the Flemish Decree on Sport Shooting or as "recreational shooting" as laid down in the federal Weapons Act. The sport shooters are always members of a shooting club that has joined one of the authorised sport shooting associations, whereas recreational shooters are not: many of them *are* members of such an association, but some are not. In fact, this is not a requirement for recreational shooters.

Differences in safety conditions

When someone applies for a firearms licence the provincial arms services ask the advice of the local police. The aim of this

advice is to exclude people who have not been convicted but who may display problematic behaviour and pose a risk to the public order by legally possessing a weapon. While the actors involved agree that this is an effective way of detecting risk cases proactively, such an advice from the local police is not required to obtain a sport shooting licence.

There are also differences in the examination of compliance with the conditions for arms possession. In addition to the five-year examination when they renew their sport shooting licence, sport shooters are annually checked as to whether they are indeed active members of the shooting association (by examining whether they have completed their 12 mandatory shooting rounds per year). A check is also performed on whether they have in the meantime been convicted for certain crimes. Recreational shooters, on the other hand, need to have only 10 shooting rounds per year. If they have not acquired any new firearms in the meantime compliance with the conditions is only checked every five years. Moreover, our study shows that a number of Flemish provincial weapon services indicate that, due to staff shortages and capacity problems, they cannot always adequately perform their inspection function. This is sometimes to the detriment of the five-year examination of issued firearms licences in some provinces. The practical consequence of these differences is that a sport shooter and a recreational shooter shooting with the same 9 mm pistol on the same shooting range at the same time are checked differently.

Shooters want to practise their hobby in a safe and legal manner. Yet, the differences between sport and recreational shooting increase the risk of misuse by people who are less interested in target shooting as such and in reality just want to possess a firearm. It is therefore in the interest of the many *bona fide* shooters that the related security risks are limited as much as possible. We therefore emphasise the importance of streamlining the various regulations.

Who is competent for recreational shooting?

The current double system arrangement of sport shooting (regulated by the Flemish Decree on Sport Shooting) and recreational shooting (regulated by the Federal Weapons Act) leaves Flanders little room to strengthen the sport shooting regulatory system stronger. To limit the security risks, it is advisable to harmonise, as far as possible, the conditions under which sport shooters and recreational shooters can acquire and possess firearms. For this purpose, it must first be clarified who is competent for recreational shooting: the Flemish or the federal government? Whereas the federal government is responsible for the security of its subjects, the Communities have full competence to issue rules specifically intended for matters allocated to them (in this case, sport and recreation).

Risk of shopping around

In contrast to the French-speaking part of Belgium, several certified shooting associations are active in Flanders. Because it is rather easy for shooting clubs in Flanders to



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change from one association to another, there is a risk of 'shopping around'. In 2013 the Flemish Minister of Sport therefore requested the associations to make clear arrangements with each other and to develop a joint self-regulating memorandum. The strong competition and sometimes difficult cooperation between the two main shooting associations (FROS and VSK) has impeded this development.

That is why the Peace Institute recommends that Sport Vlaanderen upgrades its supervisory function by monitoring the associations' activities meticulously and in a timely manner. Sport Vlaanderen can also support the associations in developing their joint self-regulating memorandum, for example, by frequently organising meetings where the associations can constructively discuss any potential disputes.

Reinforcing the capacity of the actors involved

The layered control system for the possession of firearms in Belgium and the observation that the existing regulations are currently not optimally coordinated makes it extremely important to invest in all these actors' capacities to avoid weakest links. Of course the shooting associations also play a key role. They can fulfil their role further in guaranteeing a sound safety and security policy by developing their self-regulating memorandum. This memorandum could, for example, include the objective of undertaking more visits to their clubs and closely supervising the quality of the exams organised. The associations can also contribute to both safety and efficiency by digitising their processes and documents. Finally, also the responsibility of the shooting clubs and individual members may not be ignored in this regard. In the end, they are the ones who assume daily responsibility for having their sport practised safely.



Military investments: New challenges for the control of the export of military equipment in Flanders

Investment in military equipment and military research and development (R&D) dominated an important part of the Flemish, Belgian and European political

agenda in 2018. The federal government made a decision to procure new military equipment last year. In addition, for the first time in its history, the European Union announced its intention to set up a defence fund for military research and development and, by so doing, to provide for direct military investments in the EU budget. In Flanders, the question arose as to whether, following these developments, the ban on government support for R&D projects for military purposes, which had existed since 1995, was still desirable or tenable. At the request of the Flemish Parliament, the Flemish Peace Institute also considered this topic. In this essay, we will discuss the impact of these investments on Flemish arms export controls and the challenges for the Flemish export control system.

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Military expenditure all over the world has been rising for a few years now. Various military investments that were announced in 2018 have a direct impact on Flemish policy-making. The Belgian federal government formally decided to purchase fighter planes, drones and armoured vehicles and (together with the Netherlands) started the procedure of replacing the naval fleet. In principle, part of the money invested in all these projects flows back to Belgian companies through industrial participation. In addition, the European Commission launched the European Defence Fund (EDF) in its 2021-2027 multi-year budget. The EU wants to use this fund to invest 1.5 billion euros annually in European military research and development (R&D) projects.

These initiatives had a direct repercussion on the Flemish political agenda in 2018. Since 1995, because of the Van den Brande guideline (also known as the IWT guideline), it had been forbidden to grant support to R&D projects with a military objective. Concern about the competitive position of Flemish companies and an altered geopolitical security image caused the government of Flanders to consider updating this existing Flemish policy. It is alleged that support from the Government of Flanders for defence-related R&D projects is needed to be in a position to enable Flemish companies and research institutions to participate in the EDF. It is also said that such active support would, in addition, make Flemish companies' position stronger in the industrial participation programmes. The Flemish Parliament spent a substantial amount of time on these policy intentions. In the autumn of 2018, the Government of Flanders decided to update this policy and, in principle, to make government support

ACTIVITIES ON ARMS TRADE

19/04/2018

Presentation '**The Flemish foreign arms trade**' theatre performance 'Oops' for youngsters, Ypres

23/08/2018

Seminar contribution '**Strengthening ATT implementation through better understanding of diversion risks**' i.c.w. FPS Foreign Affairs & Conflict Armament Research, Tokyo

18/09/2018

Presentation '**The EU and conventional arms exports: Between convergence and divergence**' UN disarmament fellows meeting, Brussels

5/11/2018

Debate '**Are the civilians paying the price of modern war? The Middle East conflict in Syria, Yemen and Iraq**' Handicap International & UGent, Ghent

8/11/2018

Contribution conference '**How to improve reporting**' Conference on reviewing Europe's regulations on arms export control, Berlin

14/11/2018

Presentation '**Arms trade treaty**' International Intercultural Week VIVES-SAW 2018, Kortrijk

14/11/2018

Presentation '**SDGs and the illegal arms trade: How to prevent and tackle the illegal arms trade through the UN arms trade treaty**' International Intercultural week VIVES-SAW 2018, Kortrijk

28/11/2018 & 29/11/2018

Contribution to the **General Assembly – Parliamentary Forum on Small and Light Weapons** contribution to the **Brussels Declaration – Parliamentary Action for Peace**, Brussels

4/12/2018

Presentation '**Dual use of research and misuse of research**' Ethics Week 2018 Free University Brussels, Brussels

6/12/2018

Presentation '**Project SAFTE: Firearms acquisition by terrorists in Europe**' 3rd Regional Coordination Conference for Counter-Terrorism and prevention and Countering Violent Extremism in South East Europe, Istanbul

for defence-related R&D projects possible once again. The Flemish Peace Institute actively contributed to these debates. At the request of the Speaker of the Flemish Parliament, we issued an advisory note on updating this IWT guideline. In the accompanying study, we identified various challenges facing the Government of Flanders on financing defence-related R&D. In this essay, we focus on the specific export control challenges of such developments.

Belgian and European investments in defence: opportunities for Flemish companies and research institutions

Flemish companies can be involved in the planned investments in different ways. As a matter of fact, the federal procurement programme for military equipment explicitly foresees an economic return in Belgium. The extent to which Belgian companies can benefit from economic compensation – and thus obtain additional assignments and contracts through the respective foreign company – is a criterion in the decision procedure. Such participation can be effected by deploying Belgian companies in the development and production chain of the purchased product or in the future maintenance programme. In addition, Belgian companies will be involved in the foreign countries' future projects. When the purchased product has been largely developed and the supply chains have therefore already been established – as is the case with the F-35 – Belgian companies will still have relatively little access to such a production process. The industrial participation will then rather take on the form of future partnerships. Although such industrial participation also includes projects outside the strictly military environment, it will probably be substantially defence-related.

The European Defence Fund consists of two parts. The first part provides full financing for research into innovative military technologies and products. The European financing of the second part, which is aimed at the joint development of new military systems, amounts to a maximum of 20% of the project. The remaining amount should then come from the participating (national) governments (and companies). The European Commission wants to use the EDF to encourage European defence cooperation and to europeanise the defence industry. That is why projects will need to involve at least three companies from a minimum of two European Member States. The objectives are to achieve technological autonomy, support for the defence industry and reinforcement of European security. Preparations by the consortia in both the research and development parts will reach cruising speed in the course of 2019. However, it is uncertain whether the EDF will be able to achieve its objectives in view of its relatively limited scope, the great fragmentation of the defence industry in Europe and the focus on direct military needs (rather than on truly innovative technologies). In addition, there is a considerable amount of resistance in the Member States, the European Parliament and the civil society against using the EU budget for military investments.

Belgian and European investments in defence: Good agreements make good friends

The vast majority of future commitments and occasions for cooperation to develop and manufacture new military products will also have an impact on the export control system. The new military equipment for the Belgian army will be supplied by foreign companies such as the American Lockheed Martin (the F-35 fighter plan) and General Atomics (the *Sky Guardian* drones) or the French companies Renault, Nexter and Thales (the *Scorpion* armoured vehicles). Cooperation with these companies – whether this concerns participating in the supply chain of these systems as such or cooperation on future projects – almost means, by definition, that products requiring a licence will be exported by Belgian (Flemish) companies.

At European level, the aim of an integrated European defence industry and far-reaching European defence cooperation is challenged by the reality of great differences in the Members States' arms export policies. Despite the EU's various attempts to coordinate these national export control systems, there is very little harmonisation at present. These substantial differences are accompanied by two specific challenges. In the first place, organising export control on a national scale will form a burden *during* the research and development projects. Most of the European exchange of technical know-how, technologies and other R&D output between companies and research institutes from different countries will be subject to licensing requirements. Member States still differ on which goods and technologies are subject to licensing, the types of licences granted, the administrative procedures applied, the obligations regarding end user declarations and the possibility of re-exporting. For the companies and research institutes involved, this means that they will probably be faced with diverse administrative obligations and control systems.

In addition, the success of the EDF and the joint R&D projects will be co-dependent on the extent to which the participating countries reach consensus on the final future sale of the products developed. After all, the product developed will serve not only the participating countries' military needs but, in the long term, they will also be sold to other countries. Arms exports are therefore almost unavoidable when setting up international military joint development programmes. It is precisely for that reason that past and current international collaborative programmes for developing new arms systems always contain agreements and procedures on what will finally be exported. The development of the A400M military transport aircraft – in which Belgium and Belgian (Flemish and Walloon) companies are participating – within the *Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR)* is a good illustration of this. This cooperation agreement provides that the manufacturing company – in this case, Airbus – must ask the participating governments permission if it wants to export to new destinations.

The Franco-German Friendship Treaty that Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Emmanuel Macron signed on 22 January 2019 also illustrates the need for clear agreements on arms exports in international defence cooperation. In this treaty, both governments express the will to bring about greater cooperation between their two defence industries. The treaty simultaneously recognises that shared trust between the two governments is necessary for good cooperation. A joint vision on arms export is deemed to be essential for such trust and to successfully develop joint projects, although, in principle, any possible arms export to another country will only effectively take place many years later.

Challenges for the Government of Flanders

What does all this mean for Flanders? What challenges does the Government of Flanders and, more specifically, the Flemish arms export control system, face? In the first place, these initiatives are accompanied by challenges on organising control of the export of strategic goods internally. The probable increase in the number of licence applications and in the number of companies and research institutes involved puts additional pressure on the current control system. Secondly, these organisational challenges are inextricably linked to the problem of substantively checking the desirability of specific cases of arms exports and the application of the current principles in the Flemish arms export policy.

In the first place, the planned investments and active support from the Government of Flanders signify that Flemish companies will probably participate in these international defence-related research and development projects. It is extremely difficult to estimate the precise extent of such participation at present. However, it is clear that such participation will be accompanied by an increase in the transfers of goods and technologies that are subject to licensing. It is therefore important to adequately prepare for the expected rise in the number of licensed transactions. Dealing with certain export permits is currently already rather time-consuming; an even greater workload could put the current (sometimes extremely long) processing lead time under even further pressure. Investments in the development of an online processing system for licence applications, which, in principle, will become operational during the course of 2019, are therefore essential to cope with these future challenges.

In addition, the future investments and the easing of the Flemish policy on government support for defence-related R&D projects will probably mean that new companies and research institutes will also come into contact with the existing control system. We therefore recommend that the Government of Flanders monitors which Flemish companies and research institutes are participating in the European programmes and are setting up collaborations with foreign defence companies within the context of the federal procurement programme. It is advisable to also monitor the companies outside these programmes that are applying for government support for defence-related

research and development projects. A substantial amount of time will be needed to develop an outreach strategy to increase awareness of the decree obligations with a view to compliance. However, such a strategy is necessary to guarantee that the controls are both efficient and effective.

The second challenge lies in exporting the developed arms system. Regardless of whether there is international cooperation between two or more countries, the success of such cooperation depends on the trust between the governments involved. Trust in a common assessment of the exports of the developed arms systems constitutes an essential part of this. This is precisely what appears to be a sore point in the current European context. Member States still strongly differ in their assessment of the desirability of exporting military equipment. The substantial differences in how Member States are currently dealing with the export of arms to countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates illustrate this. It is precisely because they realise these differences and the accompanying lack of trust that makes most Member States take a negative stance regarding the further reduction of export controls within Europe.

That is why clear agreements and procedures are needed to regulate the export of military equipment in the future. They also constitute part of the practice of international defence cooperation. Belgium is in a unique situation which makes for an additional dimension, however. The federal government buys military equipment and formally participates in international armament programmes, whereas controlling the exports of military equipment by Flemish companies falls under the remit of the Government of Flanders. That is why it is important that participation in international armament projects does not restrict the Flemish arms export policy. The Government of Flanders deals carefully with the export of strategic goods to unstable regions. It is important that such Flemish policy choices are not toned down or reduced by the will to participate in international cooperation programmes.

In conclusion: Adequate preparation makes for adequate policy

Planned military investments – regardless of whether these concern industrial participation in procurement programmes or participation in international R&D consortia – are accompanied by important policy choices and challenges for the Government of Flanders. In the first place, the recent easing of the IWT guideline means that the Government of Flanders will need to determine what Flemish company defence-related R&D projects it supports financially. At the same time we want to emphasise, by way of this contribution, that such investments are also accompanied by important challenges for the Flemish arms export control system. These challenges lie not only in internally organising and developing good relations with other government departments, companies and research institutes. Past and present examples of such



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cooperation programmes illustrate that international defence cooperation and arms export policy are closely interwoven. That is why participation in international joint armament programmes must be prevented from pressurising the current Flemish arms export policy. After all, a Flemish arms export policy that focuses on preventing conflict and respecting human rights may not be undermined by internal efficiency requirements or by external pressure from other participating governments.

FLEMISH PEACE INSTITUTE 2018 IN FIGURES

11

Publications of the institute

3

Advisory notes based on our research

55

Substantive contributions to activities 14 of which internally organised
16 of which abroad

159

Media mentions of which 21 on television
or on the radio

1700

People reached through mailings

233.465

Views on social media three times more
compared to last year

Evaluation report by the Scientific Council 2018

1 FEBRUARY 2019

The Scientific Council evaluates the quality of the research performed by the Flemish Peace Institute and gives the Board of Directors and the Scientific Secretariat advice on important research trends in the domains of peace and security.

The evaluation is done as follows: Detailed comments on individual publications are given before publication so that the author(s) can still take these comments into account for the final version. The annual assessment then focuses less on individual publications as such but on their overall relevance, with special attention for the broader context of the Institute's research lines. The Scientific Council notes that the new procedure has been working well.

As in previous years, the evaluation report relies on Institute's own publications as a measure of its output quality. However, the Scientific Council applauds the Institute's numerous additional activities, including its own seminars and lectures, and contributions by its researchers at other events as well as publications in external fora. The Scientific Council further notes that the Institute has been reaching out to a broad range of stakeholders, including policy-makers, the scientific community and the broader public. In the period under review, Institute staff has been highly active in outreach activities

and gained further visibility for its high-quality research. The SAFTE project in particular led to high-profile presentations in New York on 12-13 November, convened by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and at a seminar organised by the Institute together with the Belgian Foreign Affairs Ministry during the Conference of State Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. FPI staff also gave a talk at Columbia University in New York and a training at the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL). The Institute's visibility in the area of commemoration was heightened by a keynote at the Holocaust education days at the Dutch Camp Westerbork in June and numerous talks with education professionals. International coverage of FPI research by the Guardian, BBC World, the NRC Handelsblad, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal and other media underlines the successful outreach of the Institute's research.

The assessment of the Scientific Council is structured along the main thematic clusters of the Institute.

The arms trade and the use of arms

Since its establishment in 2004, research on the trade in and the use of arms has been the Institute's core business, and the Institute's publications in this field have

helped establish the Institute's reputation as a provider of reliable information and high-quality analyses. Next to its research on the trade in and the use of arms in general, the Institute has developed a distinct line of research on firearms.

For the second time, the Institute published a fact sheet on the Flemish foreign arms trade of 2017 instead of a report. The four-page document provides a concise overview of the number of licences, the value and type of military products licensed and the destination of exports. Moreover, the factsheet puts the Flemish practices in a comparative perspective by relating figures for Flanders to those for Wallonia, the Brussels region and the Federal level. Whereas the Dutch version has Flemish policy-makers as its prime target group, the English version demonstrates the Institute's ambition and potential to reach a broader international, especially European audience. In the Scientific Council's view, the 2018 factsheet confirms the value of the new format and the wisdom of the decision to switch from the reports to more readable factsheets.

In 2018, the Institute pioneered a further new format: the policy brief. The first edition contributes to the debate about a revision of EU's main regulatory framework for arms exports, i.e. the Council's 2008 Common Position. The Scientific Council sees this new format as a valuable addition to the institute's other publication series.

In addition to the factsheet and the policy brief, the Institute published two reports and two books. The two books emanate

from the large-scale and multi-year project SAFTE (Studying the Acquisition of Illicit Firearms by Terrorists in Europe) that the Institute built and managed. "Firearms Acquisition by Terrorists in Europe" is a comprehensive report that summarizes the findings of Project SAFTE, while "Triggering terror. Illicit Gun Markets and Firearms Acquisition of Terrorist Networks in Europe" presents findings from Project SAFTE more broadly. The Scientific Council congratulates the Institute for two formidable publications that document the Institute's valuable contribution to European research on illicit firearms acquisition. Especially "Firearms Acquisition" is likely to stand as a standard reference for a considerable time. Together with the various supplementary materials, such as infographics and fact sheets, it can also spur some concrete actions in the field.

The report "Een schot in de roos? Uitdagingen inzake de regulering van de schietsport in Vlaanderen" continues the Institute's series of publications on gun ownership in Belgium. The Scientific Council regards this report as an excellent basis for policy-makers dealing with various forms of gun ownership and their regulation in Flanders. The same holds true for the analysis "Overheidssteun voor dual use en militaire O&O. Uitdagingen en implicaties voor het Vlaams beleid". The analysis is methodologically sound and provides a comprehensive update of recent developments, especially on the level of the European Union, and their implications for Flanders.

Finally, the Institute published three advisory notes in the field of arms production

and exports. In addition to the annual advisory note on the Flemish arms trade, which has been an obligation under the founding decree, the Institute published advisory notes on the regulation of government support for dual use goods and on shooting sports. The enhanced collaboration on defence in the European Union and the establishment of an European Defence Fund created new challenges to Flanders' established policy to refrain from supporting research and development for military purposes. This, too, led to an advisory note by the Institute. All three advisory notes do an excellent job in providing policy-makers with a factual basis for evidence-based policy-making.

Dealing with conflict and violence in society

In comparison with the many publications on arms trade and production, the research programme "Dealing with conflict and violence in society" has been less visible in 2018. It is important to note, however, that the Scientific Council does not consider the programme's low

profile in 2018 as a cause for concern. The Scientific Council is aware of the circumstances that led to delays in finalizing and publishing the evaluation of the Flemish de-radicalization policy. It also sees no reason to question the wisdom of prior strategic decisions taken by the Institute in building up expertise and a network for studying and evaluation policies against radicalization in Flanders. In short, the Scientific Council sees a lot of potential for the Institute to acquire a reputation for high quality research on radicalization in the near future and expects that this programme will become more visible soon.

One major publication from the programme "Dealing with conflict and violence in society" has of course been published: the book "Omgaan met Controverse en Polarisatie in de klas". This is a very topical publication, which will very likely inform debates amongst practitioners in dealing with polarisation in schools. Together with various supplementary teaching materials it will also reach a broad audience.

Director

Tine Destrooper (until April 2019)

Researchers

Yamina Berrezzeg

Lore Colaert

Diederik Cops

Nils Duquet

Kevin Goris

Gregory Gourdin

Maarten Van Alstein

Communications and Strategy Officer

Brigitte Herremans

Communications

Naomi Owusu Ansah

Els Roger

Office Managers

Margarida Ferro

Micky Ryckaert

Interns

August Bergman

Aurélié Buytaert

Maria Gharibyan

Ishtiaq Khan

Eric Woods

flemish peaceinstitute

Leuvenseweg 86, 1000 Brussels

tel. + 32 2 552 45 91 | fax + 32 2 552 44 08

vredesinstituut@vlaamsparlement.be

www.flemishpeaceinstitute.eu

www.twitter.com/vredesinstituut

www.facebook.com/vlaamsvredesinstituut

www.linkedin.com/company/flemish-peace-institute

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“Believe in truth. To abandon facts is to abandon freedom. If nothing is true, then no one can criticize power, because there is no basis upon which to do so. If nothing is true, then all is spectacle. The biggest wallet pays for the most blinding lights.”

Timothy Snyder

in On Tyranny, 2017

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