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“Living together is a dynamic and conflict-ridden experience. We have to take this seriously. We must see peace as a process of interaction. Peace is not simply a matter of order, justice or harmony.”

Tomas Baum,
Director

*In a speech for the Antwerp
liberation celebrations*

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FOREWORD



TOMAS BAUM,

Director, Flemish Peace Institute

Calls for peace have become relatively rare. Calls for safety and security have gained the upper hand. That is perfectly understandable, of course, given the many terrorist attacks mounted last year. Security is important. But security policy must not remain the only response. Fear narrows our view and puts acquired rights and freedoms under pressure. If we want to have a serious discussion about security, then once again we have to look at the question of how we can live together peacefully. Hence, a call for peaceful politics is needed.

We cannot say that the global balance sheet for peaceful politics in 2016 was a positive one. Let's just look at the facts for a moment. Millions of people are living in situations of violent conflict: women, children and men were killed and injured. People were driven out of their homes and forced to flee. Not even hospitals and aid convoys were safe. Billions of dollars have been spent on the destruction of societies and economies. As a result, generations will be burdened with cycles of distrust and fear. Entire regions are being destabilised, and the threat of global terrorism affects us all. Today we are living in an era of strife, of resentment – some people even speak of an era of anger and hatred. Occasionally, all reasonable argumentation seems to disappear.

It will come as no surprise that Antonio Guterres, the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, launched a call for peace on 1 January 2017, based on the foregoing observations. "Peace must be not only our goal, but also our guide," he said. In other words, peaceful means are preferable to all others.

Peace very often has to be reinvented. Anyone who makes the effort to come to the negotiating table from a situation of escalating violence – and produces substantial agreements at that table – cannot be praised too highly. It is a fine thing that the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016 once more made a difference. By awarding the prize to President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has provided real support for a process of peace, reconciliation and justice after fifty years of civil war. Success stories about difficult transformations deserve to be shared.

Peaceful interaction is also a daily practice: people work together, engage in dialogue and put their trust in others. Accountable public institutions, education and culture are the backbone of a healthy society. Democracies stand for an ideal that comprises both

values and structures. It is no simple achievement to establish an environment in which differences of opinion can be expressed and clashing visions, ideas and arguments can be debated.

In our society, parliament and the public sphere are the forums where those differences of opinion play out. As a para-parliamentary institution of the Flemish Parliament, the Peace Institute has the task of supporting the people and their representatives in their endeavours. That position gives the Peace Institute a unique place in the varied landscape of think-tanks and research institutions.

At the beginning of the present term of office, the Flemish Peace Institute undertook a strategic thinking exercise that was also converted into specific actions whose fruits are becoming more visible as time goes by.

In 2016 we successfully completed two extensive research assignments given to us by the Flemish Parliament in 2015: one of these concerned the Yser Tower, and the other focused on controlling arms exports in various EU Member States and in our country. It is good to see how the results are being taken to heart across party boundaries. In addition, the European Commission decided to finance a major research project by the Peace Institute. This will enable us, together with other research institutes, to inform and support the regulation of firearms in society at the European level.

In 2016 we made extra efforts to share the expertise of staff in lectures and contributions. In those public activities, we diligently fulfilled our role as ambassadors for peace research.

Quite a bit changed last year in the organisation itself. We developed a new HR policy geared to realising our strategic objectives and attracting and developing talent. We have three new employees. On the one hand they had to get used to our approach, but on the other they brought a breath of fresh air into the organisation.

Last year we revised and reinvigorated the form of our annual report. The reader will again find a number of thematic contributions from our staff. The thematic thread throughout this edition is the importance of facts and research in a year in which post-truth has been proclaimed 'word of the year'. In addition, the report contains an overview of the work, activities and publications of the Peace Institute and the evaluation of this work by an internationally constituted academic advisory council. The financial operations of 2016 are explained in a separate parliamentary document (no. 48).

Peaceful politics remains relevant and necessary. The Peace Institute aims to support policy-makers and its many stakeholders. This report shows how we took our mission to heart last year.

***“Without international law
there is no civilisation.”***

Professor Christine Van den Wyngaert,
Judge at the International Criminal Court
in The Hague

At the Armistice Day lecture 2016, in Ypres



Three myths about public mass shootings

There is growing policy attention for gun violence in

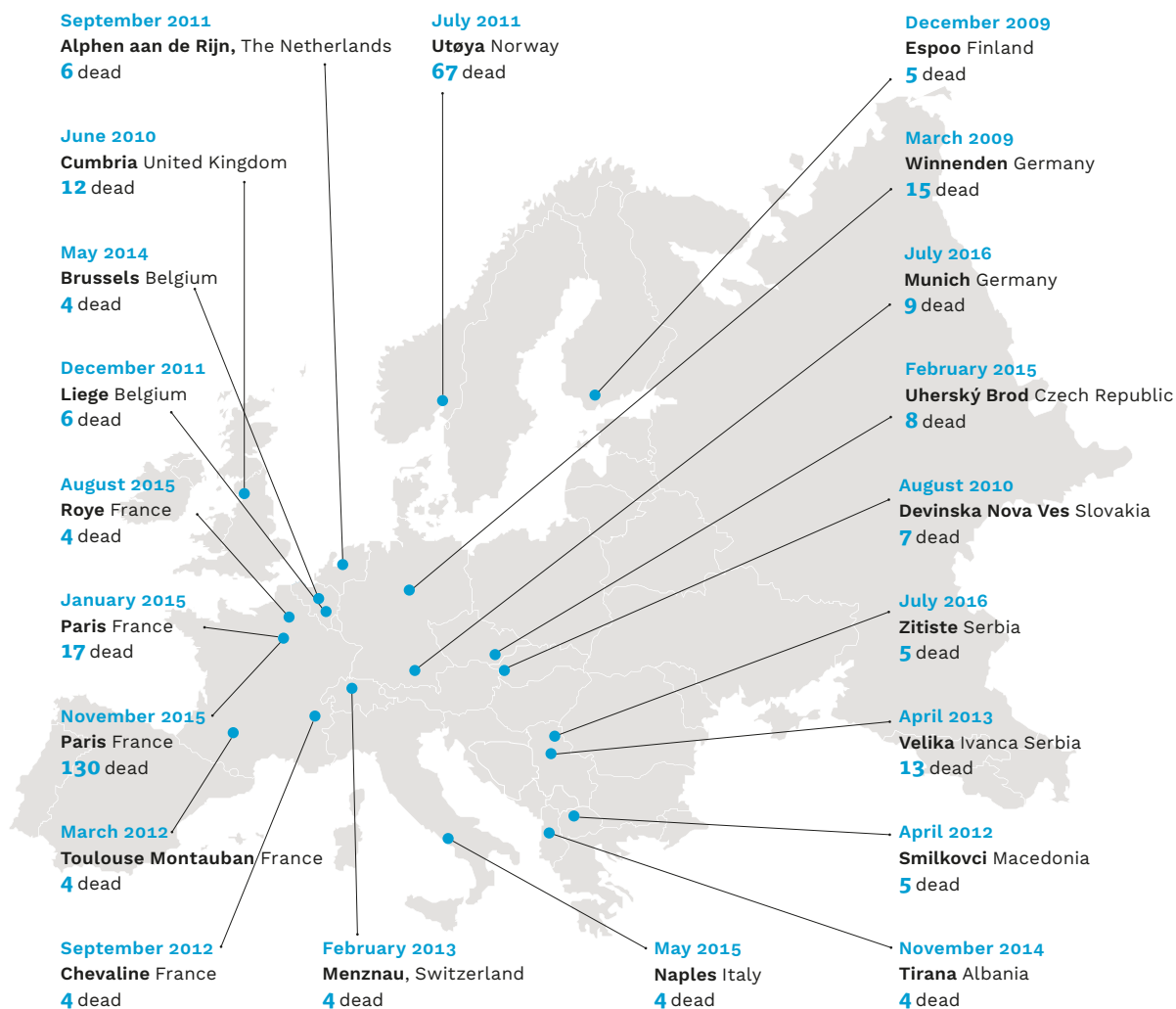
general and public mass shootings in particular. But an effective political response is hindered by numerous prevailing myths on these topics. Based on our research, we will here dissect three of these myths.

NILS DUQUET

Myth 1: Public mass shootings usually occur in the United States of America

When it comes to public mass shootings, we often think automatically of the USA and of a number of infamous

shootings such as the one at Columbine High School, at the Aurora movie theatre, or the Orlando nightclub. That is hardly surprising. Recent research covering 171 countries indicates that 31% of public mass shootings between 1966 and 2012 occurred in the USA. The USA therefore is clearly overrepresented in the statistics. However, public mass shootings occur all over the world. Europe too experiences public mass shootings every year. Our research indicates that between 2009 and 2015 there were 19 mass shootings in Europe in which at least four people were killed.



In the summer of 2016 another two mass shootings caused at least four deaths. Since 2009, there have been more than three hundred people killed in mass shootings. The shootings took place all over Europe, in fourteen different countries.

That makes an average of two to three public mass shootings in Europe every year. It is striking that all perpetrators were men and that almost all of them committed suicide or were shot by the law enforcement agencies. But there are also large differences, for example with regard to the number of deaths. The largest number of victims fell to the terrorist attack in Paris in November 2015, in which approximately 130 people died on the terraces and in the Bataclan concert hall, and to the shooting by Anders Breivik in July 2011 on the Norwegian Island of Utøya, where 67 people were shot dead.

Myth 2: Most mass shootings in Europe are committed by terrorists with Kalashnikov type rifles

The terrorists who claimed so many victims in November 2015 in Paris were armed with assault

rifles of the Kalashnikov type. Similar firearms were used in the attack on Charlie Hebdo a few months earlier and in the Jewish museum in Brussels in 2014. This suggests that it is possible for terrorists with criminal connections to obtain fully automatic assault rifles on the illicit firearms market. Those automatic rifles are attractive instruments of violence for terrorists. They make it possible to shoot a large number of people indiscriminately. But it would be wrong to generalise this image of terrorists armed with Kalashnikovs for all public mass shootings.

A glance at the list of 21 recent mass shootings in Europe reveals major differences, for example in the locations of the shootings, the numbers of perpetrators and their motives, the selection of victims and the firearms used. For example, it could be a school shooting, in which a frustrated pupil kills classmates and teachers. Or it could be a mass shooting that begins as a family drama in which family members are killed first and then the perpetrator wanders out to claim victims on the streets. In still other cases, the shootings are part of a terrorist attack in which multiple groups of offenders try to sow terror in a coordinated action.

We must further qualify the idea that it is mainly terrorists who are responsible for the gun violence: only five of the 21 mass shootings were motivated by terrorism. Nonetheless, it is true that most of the victims over the last few years died in terrorist-inspired shootings. This is largely due to the extremely high numbers of deaths in the attacks in Paris and Utoya.

A striking finding in our research was the wide range of pistols, revolvers and rifles used in mass shootings in Europe, as well as the different ways in which the killers managed to acquire their weapons. Some perpetrators had legal possession of the firearms they used, while others accessed the illicit arms market. Terrorists seem to have a preference for automatic rifles, often in combination with one or more pistols or revolvers. Because of previous criminal records, terrorists are not usually able to acquire firearms legally. In addition, they prefer as little attention from the authorities as possible. So, the vast majority of terrorists turn to the illicit market for their weaponry. The growing availability of heavy firearms among criminals in Europe has meant that terrorists with connections in that criminal world can get access to those weapons more easily.

Nevertheless, we must not generalise the use of prohibited weapons such as Kalashnikov-type rifles by people with terrorist motives. The example of

Breivik is significant. Breivik initially wanted to use a Kalashnikov during his attack, but he didn't have enough connections in the criminal underworld to get hold of one. So he decided to obtain his weapons legally: during his attack, he used a semi-automatic rifle and a pistol that he was able to buy for his activities as a hunter and sports shooter. So, for Breivik, the legal firearms market provided an easier way to arm himself than the criminal circuit. Coulibaly, the shooter in the Jewish supermarket in Paris in January 2015, likewise did not use a Kalashnikov for his hostage-taking and the concomitant shoot-out but instead bought rifles and pistols that had been decommissioned in Slovakia and were legal to purchase merely on presentation of a valid ID card. Those weapons ended up in Coulibaly's hands via our country, and somewhere along the line they were modified into sharp-shooting firearms.

The lesson to draw from this is that terrorists may have a preference for Kalashnikov-type weapons in many cases but in the end will use whatever firearms are available. This means that it is vitally important to limit access to weapons for criminals and terrorists. For this reason we must close the loopholes in European weapons legislation and at the same time put strong, constant pressure on the illicit firearms market.

Myth 3: In response to public mass shootings, politicians only target legal firearms possession

In the European Union, about 1000 people are killed each year by firearms. Some of them are killed with weapons obtained illegally, others with weapons

obtained by legal means. Because of a lack of reliable figures, the exact proportions are not clear at the moment. What we do know is that public mass shootings account for a rather small percentage of all violent deaths and of all firearm violence. Yet their impact is usually very large, because mass shootings affect the public at large and often arouse social debate on the place of firearms in society. In Europe they are often the motive or catalyst behind stricter firearms legislation. For example, Belgium sharply tightened legislation after the murderous raid by Hans Van Themsche in Antwerp in May 2006. A similar dynamic occurred in other countries, such as the United Kingdom and Germany. The European Union itself has, in the aftermath of mass shootings, sought to combat gun violence through tightening firearms regulations. Thus, in the days following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, the European Commission resurrected an amendment to the European Firearms Directive. The amendment had been proposed years ago, but the political pressure after the attacks pushed the process into a higher gear. The new Firearms Directive was recently approved by the European Parliament after months of consultation and negotiation.

Many legal firearms owners in Europe often feel they are being targeted by the politicians. In their eyes, they are being punished time after time for the misdeeds of criminals and terrorists with illegal weapons. Yet the political reaction is not limited to stricter arms legislation in general. Often the measures that are announced in the aftermath of a shooting specifically address the way in which the perpetrators gained possession of their weapons. Since a legally purchased weapon was used

PEACE INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES, 2016

29/02/2016

Contribution to an informal stakeholder meeting on the European Firearms Directive in European Parliament

15/04/2016

Contribution to a seminar on the fight against illicit weapons and the fight against terror, Information Office of the European Parliament in Spain, Madrid

24/06/2016

Explanatory notes to the advices of the Flemish Peace Institute on arms brokering and the fight against illicit weapons in a hearing of the Temporary Committee on the Fight Against Terrorism of the Federal Chamber of Representatives

09/06/2016

Comments and final remarks in the seminar '10 years of Weapons Legislation' (Politeia)

05/07/2016

Participation in a workshop on illicit firearms traffic – European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN)

15 and 16/09/2016

Participation in the Expert Group on the illicit arms trade of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

17/10/2016

Organisation of an international expert seminar 'Public Mass Shootings in Europe'

07/11/2016

Paper presentation on firearm acquisition by terrorists at the Annual International Conference of the Society for Terrorism Research

in a significant number of mass shootings, it makes sense to tighten weapons legislation or to improve the licensing procedure. In the case of fatal shooting incidents with illegal weapons, politicians usually announce that they will be intensifying the battle against the illicit firearms market. However, the practical consequences of that are often less visible to the general public.

This distinction can be observed in Belgium. In 2006, the firearms legislation was tightened after the fatal shooting incident by Van Themsche with a legally purchased firearm. In 2012, after the deadly mass shootings by Amrani at the Christmas market in Liège, various measures were announced in the fight against the illicit arms trade, such as the Weapons Action Plan and the priority of the fight against the illicit arms trade in the National Security Plan for 2012–2015.

We note a similar picture in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Paris in November 2016. The European Commission's political response was not limited to its proposal to tighten the Firearms Directive but also consisted of a new EU Action Plan against illicit trafficking in and use of firearms and explosives. This included emphasis on a stronger role for Europol and better information exchange and cooperation between national police forces.

The lack of basic information and thorough analyses of the European firearms problem is one of the main obstacles to the development of a good legislative framework for private possession of weapons and an effective firearms policy. The bulk of the research relates to the situation in the

United States, including research into the relationship between firearms and violence in industrialised countries and the use of arms in mass shootings. Historically speaking, there is significantly less research available for Europe.

A proper understanding of gun violence, however, is essential in order to decide on policy priorities, to develop targeted policy measures and to implement that policy in practice. With its research in this field, the Flemish Peace Institute aims to contribute to the development of appropriate policy measures at Flemish, Belgian and European levels.

PEACE INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES, 2016

25/11/2016

▶ **Presentation on the link between the illicit arms trade and terrorism and violent crimes at the final conference of the FIRE project** (Fighting Illicit Firearms Trafficking Routes and Actors at European level), Milan

05/12/2016

▶ **Presentation on the importance of research** at the regional meeting of SALW Commissions (Small Arms & Light Weapons) of SEESAC (South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearing-house for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons), Montenegro

09/12/2016

▶ **Status on the new European firearms directive at the Seminar 'Possession of Weapons: What can or should the police do?'** (Politeia)

19/12/2016

▶ **Presentation on explosives and tactics of terrorist groups at a seminar of ECSA** (European Corporate Security Association)

PEACE INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS, 2016

▶ **Guns for sale: The Belgian illicit gun market in a European perspective** (report)
Nils Duquet & Maarten Van Alstein

21/03/2016

▶ **Armed to kill. An exploratory analysis of the firearms used in public mass shootings in Europe.** (report)
Nils Duquet

23/06/2016

▶ **Advice on combating illicit firearms in Belgium**

07/01/2016







Er ist wieder da?* *[Is he back again?]

Sense and nonsense of historical comparisons in the public debate

2016 has every reason to be called an *historic* year. Not only because it was a year with important political milestones such as Brexit and the election of Donald Trump but also because history itself made the headlines. This was mainly in the form of a wealth of comparisons between today and the 1930s. Trump and the crisis in the EU, as well as the refugee

crisis, the increasing polarisation, the debate on post-truth and the political breakthrough of new media: they all offered a fertile background for making comparisons with the dark decade of the previous century – comparisons that sweepingly linked contemporary economic and identity crises to the rise of populist or extreme movements or that, without too much circumspection, drew direct links between Donald Trump and Adolf Hitler.

**LORE COLAERT &
MAARTEN VAN ALSTEIN**

This new prominence of history in the public debate is, to say the least, striking. Historians have traditionally been reluctant to draw parallels between present and past, let alone distil clear ‘lessons’ from history. History doesn’t repeat itself unambiguously, as they say. And yet, over the last few months, not just journalists and columnists but also historians joined in the chorus of historical comparisons. Thus they breathed new life into an interesting question: what is the sense and nonsense of historical comparisons?

‘We’re going back in time!’

Almost immediately after the inauguration speech by Donald Trump, economist Paul De Grauwe stated that he was concerned about the announced protectionism of the new administration, an economic and political isolationism that, in his opinion, “turns the clock back a hundred years”. With that comment, De Grauwe joined a series of Flemish opinion-makers who had begun to compare the present world stage with that of the 1930s. Historian Herman Van Goethem, for example, drew a number of striking parallels with the 1930s, all of which in his opinion, contribute to increasing polarisation. In addition to the observation that nationalism is on the rise, Van Goethem also referred to the masses who today – just as then – were looking for leaders, as well as to the power of inflammatory words and new media (then the radio, now Twitter) that would spread those words far and wide. His colleague Frank Caestecker compared the European handling of Syrian refugees with the closing of the borders to Jewish refugees from Germany. And Rachida Aziz was concerned about the resurgence of scapegoat mechanisms and compared today’s Islamophobia with the anti-Semitism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

These historical comparisons are a clear expression of deep unease. Some opinion-makers expressed this unease more directly by using the term fascism and not shrinking from comparing Trump with Hitler. “Er ist wieder da” [“He’s back!”], wrote Bart Eeckhout with a reference to the satirical book by Timur Vermes in which Hitler comes back to life in modern-day Berlin. Eeckhout clarified his point: “We’ve been here before. A frustrated narcissist who feeds his obsessions for power by inciting fear and anger through stigmatising different sections of the population and provoking conflicts: we know how this can end up.” Kader Abdollah in his turn was frightened by an “image that flashed through his mind” when he saw the impact of Trump’s travel ban all around him at Dubai Airport: “Germany, Hitler.” Historian Tine Hens decided just for once to violate Godwin’s law: “Of course, history never repeats itself in the same way, but there are mechanisms, systems that are described and documented perfectly, which you can recognise if you have looked at the roller-coaster of events of the last few days.” Her colleague Rutger Bregman of *De Correspondent* saw in the events in America “the first symptoms of fascism.” “If history teaches us anything, it is that autocrats mean what they say. At the beginning of the twenties, *The New York Times* also wrote that Hitler’s anti-Semitism was just a gimmick.” And slogans such as ‘*Make America Great Again*’ are, in his opinion, typical fascist rhetoric. The lessons that make the most lasting impression, which were eagerly shared on social media, came from Holocaust Historian Timothy Snyder: “Be calm when the unthinkable arrives. When the terrorist attack

comes, remember that all authoritarians at all times either await or plan such events in order to consolidate power. Think of the Reichstag fire. The sudden disaster that requires to the end of the balance of power, the end of opposition parties, and so on, is the oldest trick in the Hitlerian book. Don't fall for it."

This flurry of historical comparisons encouraged other observers to more reticence. Bruno De Wever, for example, pointed out the many differences between Trump and Hitler and clarified that populism and fascism are not synonymous. Moreover, the context is very different: the rise of Hitler can only be understood in the aftermath of the First World War, the crisis of 1929 and the sweeping away of the middle class. In his opinion, the comparison with Hitler obfuscates more than it clarifies. Economist Ivan Van de Cloot also pointed out that "demonising Trump's electors could (...) lead to more polarisation and make it more difficult to bridge the gap." This last remark is interesting. It reminds us that historical comparisons have or aim to have *effects*. In the form of a warning they can imply a call to action – for example, to uphold democracy, which indeed continually needs to be protected against sliding down the slippery slope towards dictatorship or violence. But in these comparisons it is not uncommon to also find a moral denunciation of a political adversary. At the same time, the Hitler comparison often has a wider impact because – as Van de Cloot remarks – the supporters of that adversary are also being drawn into the fray. Equating today's populism with Nazism thus provides an excuse for not responding to the grievances of their electors.

A provisional conclusion? Historical comparisons are not innocuous. But are they therefore inappropriate? How can we learn from comparing the past with the present? Let us take a look at the conditions that allow historical comparisons to have validity.

History as a teacher for the present?

Let us begin with an obvious but often forgotten premise. It is actually a truism: comparing is not the same as searching for parallels. That is just one aspect of it. Comparing means: simultaneously searching for both similarities and differences. It is important that events be always framed in their historical context and that the complexity of history be given its rightful place. If that is done properly, comparative reflections can provide many interesting insights, both into the past and into the present.

Anyone who studies history in this critical way, with its many subtle differences, will inevitably encounter different perspectives, conflicts within generations and people who went against the mainstream. The person who takes that understanding to heart can indeed see history as a teacher – a teacher who strengthens attitudes such as a critical mind and multiperspectivity. Those attitudes can also be useful today to read politics and society with a critical eye.

Of course, none of this means that history has cut-and-dried lessons to offer, in the sense of clear prescriptions for what we should do in the present. Indeed, history does not repeat itself uniformly, and the future always remains open. But, as Snyder comments, history does show “how bad things can get.” Once you delve into the complexity of history, you also learn how differently things could have gone, and therefore how things could go differently today. It is in this way that historical comparisons can inspire us to think about alternative ways of acting in the present. Or, to paraphrase the words of the Dutch cabaret artist Wim de Bie: if you want to judge the present, you have to have enough past.

With these thoughts in mind, we return to comparing the present era with developments in the past. Our proposal is to dig deeper than making comparisons with Hitler, which soon get swallowed up in a game of rhetoric and accusations. The historical-comparative view of some opinion-makers, moreover, ranged further than a mere comparison with the 1930s – and here we would like to build further on that idea. Some included in their historical analyses an earlier wave of globalisation – the one that took place between 1870 and 1914. And that is very interesting, because beyond specific historical personalities and ideologies, also structures and radical transformations come into our field of view.

A broader comparison: globalisation, change, unease

Jonathan Holslag in *De Standaard* and Ruchir Sharma in *The New York Times* were among the observers who widened the field of historical comparisons. They saw meaningful parallels between the globalised world of today and the one that

existed before the First World War: lightning-fast transformations in industry, technology, politics and society along with a spectacular increase in material prosperity, international trade and connectivity. However, in pre-1914 Europe those radical developments were not without consequences – and it is here that the comparison becomes especially interesting: the *Belle Epoque* was at the same time a world of enormous tensions and uncertainties. There were volatile balances of power, large income disparities, disruption through revolutions in industry and technology and – despite the ever-increasing levels of material prosperity and widely proclaimed optimism about progress – growing feelings of restlessness and boredom. People felt themselves under increasing pressure and threatened in their desire to be part of a greater whole. Karl Marx spoke of alienation, Sigmund Freud about unease in civilization. Quite a number of modernist artists and intellectuals deplored a world that was riddled with materialism and rational efficiency, decline and decadence, and saw in purifying violence the possibility of rebirth and a new beginning.

Timothy Snyder also drew the parallel with the period of intense globalisation after 1870. “Today,” he said, “we are facing the end of the second globalisation, which began in the sixties and seventies of the previous century. Once again, we thought that there was nothing but progress, a feeling similar to that of the optimism about progress of around

PEACE INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES, 2016

04/03/2016

Contribution to Teachers' Day: 'Radical – Not Extreme' – Flemish Parliament

10/03/2016

Guest lecture at the University of Antwerp 'History as (political) legitimacy'

13/05/2016

Lecture – 'Radicalisation: Security & pedagogic challenges' at the International Philosophy Olympiad 2016 on war and peace in Ghent

14/05/2016

Opening of photo exhibition: 'The graves are nice this time of year' by Jimmy Kets in Aalst

18/05/2016

Lecture: 'Dealing with conflicts' in the GO! Athenaeum in Oudenaarde

10/06/2016

Panel contribution to the UNESCO Conference 'Cultural Diversity under attack: Protecting Heritage for Peace' in Brussels

13/06/2016

Contribution to the interim reflection moment '100 Years of the Great War in the Westhoek' organised by Westtoer

21/10/2016

Lecture: 'The Yser Tower as Memorial of Flemish Emancipation and Peace' at CEGESOMA, Study and Documentation Centre, War and Contemporary Society

18/10/2016

Review of the research report and advice on the Memorial of Flemish Emancipation and Peace in the Commission for General Policy, Finances and Budget of the Flemish Parliament

13/05/2016

Lecture – 'Radicalisation: Security & pedagogic challenges' at the International Philosophy Olympiad 2016 on war and peace in Ghent

1890. Everyone thought: the Enlightenment will triumph, there is world trade from which everyone will benefit – in short everyone is happy. But, as we now know for the second time, things did not go like that."

A disturbing conclusion, which of course raises the question: where will this comparison ultimately lead us? Because we know how it ended with the disruptive times of the first globalisation. The worldwide connectivity was shot down in flames in the world conflagration of 1914–18. And that war was indeed a new beginning: old empires collapsed, national frustrations and stock market crashes followed, as well as Bolshevik and fascist revolutions. Now the historical comparison gets extremely dark and foreboding. But as we pointed out above, history never repeats itself uniformly, and the future always remains open. With Rutger Bregman we can hope that the differences between the world of that time and the world of today are greater than the similarities – for example, that our institutions are stronger, that the world economy is in better shape, and that the use of violence is not as 'normal' as it was back then. Thus the current wave of anti-globalisation does not have to turn into decay and, ultimately, violence as it did in the 1930s.

But, then, what can this comparison teach us? For Snyder there are 'warning signals', such as: "States ruled by a one-party system, the unleashing of the State's monopoly on violence and, above all, the sudden event used as an excuse to announce a state of emergency."

We would like to open up a different perspective. For this, we focus on a key ele-

ment in the comparison between both periods of globalisation: the unease that is aroused by far-reaching social changes. History has taught us that there are risks involved with widespread unease and uncertainty – they can be the fuel on which extreme movements can feed. The question then arises: how are we going to deal with that unease?

Democratic responses to the unease

Today we are living in a time that is different

from the decades preceding the First World War, but as we saw above, there are also interesting similarities. The telegram of that time is the Internet of today, the steamship has become a container ship and, just as at the end of the long nineteenth century, we are now experiencing sweeping transformations that give some people the feeling of utter powerlessness. Globalisation has led to a volatile multipolar world order. An abundance of consumer goods has created a shortage of raw materials. Climate change is a fact. The advance of technology has led to job losses or alienated people from their work. New media and the management of *big data* are enabling powerful organisations to manipulate public opinion. And various waves of migrants have created a super-diverse society. Lines of fracture are appearing between rich and poor, well and poorly educated, and between people of different cultural backgrounds. All of these things are arousing fears and uncertainties in all corners of our society. In Western Europe and the United States that unease is expressing itself in right-wing populism; and Southern Europe is flirting with left-wing populism.

PEACE INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES, 2016

18/10/2016

Introduction to Studium Generale – Kinsbergen Chair at the AP High School, Antwerp, on the subject of 'Borders'

08/12/2016

Guest lecture at the University of Ghent: 'The Yser Museum as custodian of the past'

PEACE INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS, 2016

The Yser Tower as a memorial to Flemish Emancipation and Peace (report)

04/07/2016

Advice on the Yser Tower, recognised by decree of 15 July 2011 as a memorial to Flemish Emancipation and Peace

04/07/2016

What can we do about it? “Be a patriot,” Snyder concludes, and he summons us as critical citizens to protect democracy. Does history have anything to teach us in this regard? Perhaps this can be a ‘lesson’: take the unease seriously, as well as the reasons for it, the perceived and actual adverse effects of radical social and economic changes. The grievances of citizens demand real solutions and alternatives, which transcend both provocative slogans and the facile accusations of populism. If we do not take the unease seriously and do not try to resolve it democratically, we face serious risks: it might then express itself in other ways. A democratic society in which a substantial proportion of the population feels uneasy or alienated has a problem.

“In critical public history, history itself must be the starting-point, even if it arouses controversies. It must be told openly, take multi-perspectivity seriously, and not only formulate answers but also raise questions and discussions.”

Maarten Van Alstein,

during the exchange of views on the research report and advice on the Yser Tower in the Commission for General Policy, Finances and Budget of the Flemish Parliament



Controlling arms exports: the difficult relationship between economy, security and human rights

For a quarter of a century now, the EU has been trying to harmonise the arms export control policies of its member states. However, individual EU member states retain the right to decide on specific license applications for arms exports. It is striking that countries or regions usually

consider their own arms export control system to be the most stringent, best developed or most transparent. We discuss that matter with Gregory Gourdin and Diederik Cops, who conducted a comparative analysis of arms export control systems in eight EU member states, at the request of the Committee on Foreign Policy of the Flemish Parliament with a view to the parliamentary evaluation of the Flemish Arms Trade Decree.

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**INTERVIEW WITH
DIEDERIK COPS & GREGORY GOURDIN**

We will come straight to the point: which EU member state actually has the best arms export control system?

Diederik Cops: That is a question often asked but, at the same time, very difficult to answer. First and foremost, it is very difficult to compare systems that, because of their specific historical national context, differ significantly from each other. Furthermore, arms export controls need to balance different basic principles. You can look at the economic impact of the arms exports, at the security interests involved, or at concerns about *human rights* in the country of end use. Your opinion about the best system and the best practices will therefore vary greatly, depending on what basic principle you consider to be the most important.

Is it then possible at all to compare countries and systems in a meaningful way?

Gregory Gourdin: You certainly can make comparisons, but you must be very cautious when you interpret them. You must always view the systems as a whole. You do not want to turn the spotlight on one specific aspect but then lose sight of certain balances. In addition, it is always important to look at the wider context: what do the national context and the domestic defence industry look like? For example, in Belgium the competence over arms export controls is regionalised, which you can only understand if you know the broader history of the political-communitarian tensions. And of course the nature of the defence industry plays a role. Take for example a country that only produces components and supplies them to the large defence companies who produce finished military systems; that coun-

try must face the challenge of knowing what the final use of those goods will be.

So, we can say that the Flemish system is no better or worse than any other?

Gregory: Yes and no. As Diederik already said: it depends on the basic principle you consider to be most important. You'll always find a country where a particular aspect is better regulated than in Flanders. But the question is whether that is relevant to the Flemish system, given the particular characteristics of the Flemish defence industry and its context. Conversely, there are undoubtedly aspects in the Flemish system that other governments or players may see as a good practice. For example, think of the high degree of transparency in Flanders.

THE COMMON 'LANGUAGE' OF EUROPE

The EU has been taking initiatives for controlling the arms trade for a long time. How have these developed?

Gregory: Over the last few decades, the European Union has indeed tried to harmonise the national export control systems. They did this by adopting a Directive on arms transfers in the EU and a Common Position for the export of arms to countries outside the EU. Those instruments provide the framework within which the member states shape their own arms export control system. I'll give an example: all the systems we investigated for arms export control make use of the so-called Common European Military List. That list includes the goods for which an export licence is mandatory and harmonises, to a certain extent, the definition of

PEACE INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES, 2016

08/03/2016

Lecture on European regulation of the arms trade, during the 81st Session of the International European Youth Parliament in Belfast, Northern Ireland

16/03/2016

Lecture on 'The Belgian arms trade' at the Free University of Brussels

06/04/2016

Contribution to seminar 'The Arms Trade and European Security – European Governance and the Role of Parliaments' in Het Huis van Europa ['The House of Europe'] in The Hague

07/04/2016

Panel contribution 'Rules of the game for the arms trade' – Brussels School of International Studies

10/05/2016

Lecture on European arms exports at seminar 'Internal security and the fight against terrorism within the EU' for the van Ryckelvelde non-profit organisation

14/06/2016

Contribution to COARM NGO meeting – a European consultation platform for inspection of the arms trade

05/07/2016

Explanatory remarks in Commission for Foreign Policy, European Affairs, Tourism and Historic Buildings of the Flemish Parliament on the activity report of 2015 and the European Benchmark Study on arms export controls in Flanders

13/10/2016

Lecture on 'The arms trade in Belgium' at Rotary Antwerp Metropolis

18/10/2016

Participation in round table discussion at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation on 'Arms export controls and public scrutiny', with parliamentary representatives from Central American countries

what should be considered a weapon. That common 'language' ultimately makes it possible for EU member states to make reciprocal comparisons and checks. But the problem is that it still leaves a margin of interpretation. The features of what is on the list are often described in fairly general terms. What exactly is '*specially designed for military use*'? And what does '*specially adapted for military use*' mean? The various EU member states give different answers to those questions, which in turn entails practical differences in the control of these products.

So we face a contradiction. Formally speaking, there is a European harmonisation, but on a substantial level, full harmonisation is still a long way off. And that doesn't just apply to the description of goods considered as 'military'. We see a similar dynamic in other areas too.

Can you give us an example?

Diederik: Take the criteria that the member states apply when they assess a licence application to export military goods. For example: what is the risk that these products will be used for human rights abuses or to fuel armed conflicts? The EU has established a number of minimum criteria for this in the Common Position, but the member states still interpret those criteria differently and apply different risk assessments. That has far-reaching consequences.

EU member states are fully aware of those differences in interpretation, which creates a certain tension. Of course European member states trust each other. But at the same time they are aware that finished products

can ultimately go to countries that they themselves would not supply. This is why member states often want to keep control over what happens to 'their' goods. So, transferring the responsibility for the further trade in those products to another EU member state is no simple matter.

There is still no completely free and unified European market in military equipment. This will only come to pass when there is a more common European security and foreign policy. Our research suggests that the member states will be prepared to refrain from any further controls only if they can and want to trust other member states to interpret the assessment criteria in the same way.

Has Europe failed then?

Gregory: It just depends on how you look at it. It is true that there is no full harmonisation, but thanks to Europe there is a common framework for all member states. The member states do have room in that framework to make their own choices as regards controls over arms exports, and those choices are often inspired by their own national, political and cultural context and defence industry.

So you certainly can't see the harmonisation as a top-down narrative, where 'Brussels' imposes rules and standards on the member states. European social, economic and political developments have an impact on the policy of the member states, but it also works vice-versa. So you see interactions between the two political levels, the national and the European. And you also have to take into account the context in which these interactions occur.

PEACE INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES, 2016

24/10/2016

Lecture on 'Interest groups and regulation of the arms trade' at the Institute for Higher Social Communication Studies in Brussels

07/12/2016

Guest lecture at the University of Ghent on 'Export Controls in the EU'

12/12/2016

Contribution on 'Control of exports of dual-use goods' at the Export Control Forum 2016 of the European Commission

PEACE INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS, 2016

Spelregels voor wapenhandel ['Rules of the game for the arms trade'] (book)

Sara Depauw & Tomas Baum

29/01/2016

Flemish foreign arms trade 2015 (report)

Diederik Cops & Nils Duquet

05/07/2016

Flemish arms export controls in Europe. The complex issue of European harmonisation (report)

Diederik Cops, Nils Duquet, Gregory Gourdin

23/12/2016

Advice on the annual report of the Government of Flanders on the arms trade in 2015

05/07/2016

Advice on temporary trade restrictions for exports of military equipment, firearms, munitions and law enforcement equipment

06/10/2016

Speaking of context: will the election of Donald Trump as president of the USA change anything in the situation?

Diederik: His election was clearly a wake-up call for the EU, especially when he pointed out the European partners' obligations within NATO. The new initiatives on the part of the EU to develop a genuine European defence union are clearly a reaction to that. The aim would be not only to ensure a common basis for member states' military procurements but also to create a genuine European defence market and industry. European institutions are currently very much focused on the further development of that common market. European attention to exports to non-EU countries seem to have been pushed somewhat more into the background.

Do you see a problem there?

Diederik: A stronger internal market and the export policy to non-EU countries are intertwined. Admittedly, other member states are the main partners for trade in military equipment. But most of the equipment produced does leave the EU at a some point in time. So this is the challenge for the EU: identifying and regulating cross connections between the further development of the internal market and exports to non-European countries. And that will not be so easy.

Why not?

Diederik: Perhaps more than other public organisations, the EU is a motley amalgam of institutions, each with a different approach. The internal market for trade in military equipment comes under the purview of the European Commission. Foreign policy, in contrast, is dealt with exclusively by the European Council.

Each institution has its own focus, and establishing formal and informal relationships is far from a foregone conclusion. Institutional rigidity is perhaps even stronger in the EU than at other organisations.

FLANDERS AND THE END-USERS

And what about Flanders in this context?

Gregory: As far as military equipment is concerned, Flanders mainly has a supply economy: it mainly supplies components of military equipment to the large Western defence industries. Firearms, tanks, fighter aircraft – we don't make those things in Flanders. Flemish companies focus mainly on the production of high technology components, which are then incorporated into finished weapons systems in countries such as Germany, the USA or the UK.

Consequently, Flanders wants to maintain a certain degree of control on what is done with Flemish products once they have been exported. Even when a product goes to another EU member state, the Flemish Government will try to find out what country the product will eventually end up in. Flanders then assesses the export request with a view to the situation in that second country. We call that the 'country of final use'. For example, in 2016 Flanders refused licence requests for products intended for Germany because they were ultimately destined for the United Arab Emirates and might have been used in the conflict in Yemen.

Diederik: And that is a challenge for the control system. Because you don't always

know in advance in which countries or in whose hands the goods will eventually end up. Control over final use will therefore continue to be a major challenge for the Government of Flanders. They have to walk a tightrope between two concerns. On the one hand, they want to check the final end use thoroughly and get as clear a picture as possible before they issue a licence. On the other hand, they don't want to impose an excessive burden on the companies concerned.

So what do you suggest in concrete terms for that Flemish export control?

Diederik: In order to collect information in the country of final use, Flanders should make more use of existing expertise. This can be at both the Flemish and Federal level – we only have to think of the network of branches of *Flanders Investment & Trade* in many countries and the network of Belgian consulates and embassies.

Another option might be to collaborate and communicate more on this matter Europe-wide. Other member states collect such information as well: it would be efficient and effective to exchange it in one way or another. The more information and the higher its quality, the better and faster you can assess whether a certain export is desirable.

It's great that Flanders is striving not to supply goods that could be used in an armed conflict. But critics will say it's easy to pursue a strict policy and extol human rights when there are few economic interests at stake.

Diederik: That is true to some extent. If your country or region doesn't export to

those countries, it is indeed 'easy' to refuse such exports in principle. If Flanders decides not to approve a licence, it will have very little impact on employment here. But it's a different matter if your exports are highly dependent on one or a few countries. Just look at the Walloon Region or the United Kingdom, for example, where about half of their exports of military equipment are destined for Saudi Arabia. Stopping those exports would have far-reaching consequences for employment.

But as we said, economic interests are not the only consideration. The EU member states have promised to prioritise concerns about human rights and conflict prevention in the assessment of arms export applications. At the same time there remains much room for national interpretations when weighing specific cases.

So is there much point in taking account of Europe? Should Flanders continue to plead for 'more Europe'?

Gregory: Let us be clear: in terms of effectiveness, control over arms exports is always better done collectively. The more countries involved, the better the control. From that point of view, aiming for further Europeanisation is a good thing. Do we think that a responsible arms trade policy is really important and do we really want to implement it? If so, then European cooperation is a must. The political and legislative weight of the EU on the world stage is greater than that of each member state individually.

Arms embargoes are a good example. Their aim is often to avoid violations of human rights or to defuse armed con-

PEACE INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES, 2016

17/02/2016

Organisation of round-table discussions with the Minister of Defence on the Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index of Transparency International

24/03/2016

Lecture: 'Dealing with war and peace'

– Spectrum University of Antwerp

12/05/2016

Opening lecture at the International Philosophy Olympiad 2016 on war and peace in Ghent

13/05/2016

Workshops: 'Talking about war and peace: From fiction to reality' and 'Radicalisation: What does it mean and what can teachers do?' at the International Philosophy Olympiad 2016 on war and peace in Ghent

03/09/2016

Speech: 'Freedom as a guide for peace' in connection with the 72nd Antwerp liberation celebrations

09/09/2016

Presentation on cosmopolitanism and peace at the 10th Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research

19-21/09/2016

Study trip to Vienna with a delegation from the Foreign Policy Commission of the Flemish Parliament

20/09/2016

Opening of the exhibition: 'The graves are nice this time of year' by Jimmy Kets in Vienna

26/09/2016

Organisation of seminar on 'The future of UN peace operations in a changing world' with the Association for the United Nations, the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies and Pax Christi Flanders

flicts. They can only really achieve that when as many countries as possible join in. Otherwise you will change little in practice. But at the same time there is a weakness in that strategy. Think for a moment of the disputed weapons supplies to Saudi Arabia: to get all the member states acting as one, you'll have to compromise a lot. As a country or region you will always have to ask yourself: are we going to join the race to the bottom, or do we want to set a higher standard?

Of course, that doesn't mean that Flanders should hide behind Europe, or that that it can't do anything without adopting European measures. But perhaps the measures will be more symbolic in nature, especially when exports are minimal. But in (foreign) policy the measures are often symbolic.

UPWARDS

So what can Flanders do?

Diederik: The convergence of EU arms export policy could be highlighted as a focal point in Flemish policy. But then it is necessary to have a clear view of the direction such harmonisation must take. At the Flemish Peace Institute, we argue that Flanders should be ambitious in that regard. It can be an advocate for 'upward' harmonisation. By this we mean: in the direction of a more (ethically) responsible European arms export policy, with more mutual European rapport. Naturally, without side-lining the economic and security considerations. Realism also has a place in the approach to arms exports. Flanders would do best to make its own substantial choices. It is better for Flanders to highlight its own priorities and basic

principles in its arms export policy. It can only do that by articulating clear principles and objectives for its own *foreign* policy.

We have had a Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Flanders since the beginning of 2017. Flanders clearly wants to move with greater self-assurance on the international stage. Arms exports can and must play an important role in this respect, for they are an explicit and traditional component of foreign policy. The Government of Flanders recently published various policy documents on such topics as human rights, development cooperation and the future of the EU. Those documents are already a first foundation stone for an explicit and integrated foreign policy. It seems consistent to us that the Flemish Government should advance such a detailed view for arms exports too. That view could then determine the Flemish position on the direction the EU should take in this matter.

PEACE INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES, 2016

24/10/2016

Contribution to United Nations Day Flanders in the Flemish Parliament

10/11/2016

Armistice Day lecture by Chris Van de Wyngaert and concert by Revue Blanche in Ypres, in collaboration with In Flanders Fields Museum and City of Ypres

08/12/2016

Lecture: 'Judging war and peace' at Rotary Antwerp Metropolis

PEACE INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS, 2016

Speeches on the occasion of the presentation of the Annual Report 2015 of the Flemish Peace Institute

04/05/2016

Without international law, no international civilisation. Armistice Day lecture by Professor Christine van Den Wyngaert, Judge at the International Criminal Court in The Hague

17/11/2016

SIPRI Yearbook 2016 – Summary in Dutch (report)

22/11/2016





The paradox of policy-oriented research

The politician and the scientist have a lot in common: they describe the world, analyse problems, argue their cases and draw conclusions. Both are dependent on the public space: the assessment of political interventions or scientific publications is a public issue.



TOMAS BAUM

Yet politician and scientist each have a different vocation, a different commitment. Science is essentially a quest for – and production of – reliable knowledge. The ethos of the scientist is to be found in the collection of information, in research and explanation. The primary concern of the politician is to give direction to society on the basis of ideas. After all, politics works on the basis of ideology. Scientific discoveries and knowledge are helpful, useful and necessary for political decision-making, but scientific research does not translate unmediated into policy, nor can it replace political judgement.

Our society has a vital interest in the use of scientific knowledge. We can see that interest in very practical terms in applied research. We only have to think of research that addresses vital needs or impact studies that outline the implications of interventions or plans in advance. And afterwards, too, the scien-

tific method can help to properly assess any policy devised by parliaments and administrations. It goes without saying that experts can disagree with each other, that risk assessments may vary greatly and that some policy issues are enormously complex. But scientists can inspire, support and evaluate policy from their own points of reference. Science itself then benefits by being able to use the results of that applied research.

However, there is a fundamental gap between science and politics. The encounter between power and science is never predictable. After all, analyses, facts and figures seldom speak for themselves, certainly not in a political arena. Rulers – of necessity – deal with information politically, and thus selectively. They establish priorities in the problems that they raise or want to solve. They have to pass judgements and take decisions under pressure of time and on the basis of incomplete information. They like to emphasise information that is uncomfortable for opponents, and they prefer to minimise facts that do not fit with their view of social reality. Sometimes a ruler will deal very creatively with the facts, and the lie will even appear on the stage.

Is it possible to close the gap? Perhaps with a philosopher-king in power who has divine insight on truth and pronounces better value judgements than other mortals? Or would we prefer scientists and technocrats at the helm of the country? People – and machines – who can analyse the world so well that the decisions just follow from the analysis, and value judgements are no longer necessary? A draconian solution to close the gap would be censorship: publishing only knowledge that rulers consider desirable. Each of these ‘solutions’ means a loss for science and politics.

It is better to leave the gap and pay attention to ways to bridge it. And yet policy-oriented research will always hinge on a paradox: we cherish the ambition to bridge the gap between science and policy but also retain the perception that the gap must be maintained. That is a challenge for both scientists and policy-makers.

When the Flemish Parliament founded the Peace Institute in 2005 as an independent research institute active in the field of peace issues, it expected scientific work with a political and societal finality: it gave a clear mandate to do research for a policy oriented towards peace. The founders provided for three bodies to reconcile the scientific nature of the work with the political integration. The Scientific Secretariat is the operational heart of the Institute. The staff gather information, conduct research, organise consultations and prepare publications and presentations. The Board of Directors – with representatives from the parliamentary parties, civil-society organisations and academia – issues advice and manages the institute. The Scientific Council, a panel of international experts, supervises and evaluates the research. Thereby the bridging function of the Institute is also assured in its own organisation chart.

The Peace Institute is not an ivory tower. It very pragmatically strives to make the link with politics by keeping up to date with political events and thought. Researchers

PEACE INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS IN EXTERNAL CHANNELS

Tomas Baum, **'Kant's conditions for peace: A critical approach'**, in D. Praet (ed.), *Philosophy of War and Peace*, Ghent: International Philosophy Olympiad, May 2016.

Nils Duquet, **'10 jaar Wapenwet'**, *Politiejournaal*, September 2016

Nils Duquet, **'Politiebewapening: munitie voor een onderbouwd debat'**

Nils Duquet, **'10 jaar wapenwet: Geschiedenis, praktijk, impact en aandachtspunten'**

Nils Duquet and Jorg Kustermans, **'Als de stoppen doorslaan: Hoe voorkomen dat extreme geweldplegers kunnen toeslaan?'**

Nils Duquet and Maarten Van Alstein, **'De wapenwet en het sport-schuttersdecreet: passen de puzzelstukjes?'**

Nils Duquet and Maarten Van Alstein, **'Illegale vuurwapens in België'** in E. De Baene (red.), *Algemene beschouwingen over de vuurwapen-reglementering*, Brussels: Politeia, 2016.

Nils Duquet, **'Firearms acquisition and the terrorism-criminality nexus'**, in T. Renard (red.), *Counter-terrorism in Belgium: Key challenges and policy options*, Brussels: Egmont Instituut

Nils Duquet and Maarten Van Alstein, **'De illegale wapenhandel'**, in E. De Baene (red.), *Wapens. Economische en individuele activiteiten*, Heule: Inni, 2016.

Maarten Van Alstein, **'Facing a difficult past? The Yser Tower in Dixmude, Belgium'**, *Cultures of History Forum*, Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena, November 2016.

Maarten Van Alstein, **'The memory of peace'**, in D. Praet (ed.), *Philosophy of War and Peace*, Gent: International Philosophy Olympiad, May 2016.

systematically keep abreast of current affairs and the relevant work in the various parliaments, especially the political agenda in the Flemish Parliament, as well as that in the Federal and European Parliaments. After all, the politics of peace transcends the delimitation of powers and does not come to a halt at borders. By monitoring the current political agenda, researchers not only bring problems to light but also identify opportunities.

The second crucial requirement to enable good-quality policy-oriented research and thus bridge the gap is the involvement of various stakeholders and other experts in the current research. For this reason, the Institute focuses on three kinds of knowledge when fulfilling its assignments: (1) objectified scientific knowledge that provides understanding; (2) expertise or experience that is useful for policy; and (3) reflection that involves discussion of ethical principles and consideration long-term impacts. By combining those three forms of knowledge, the Peace Institute tries to play a role in sometimes complex and controversial themes, without itself becoming the subject of the controversy.

The third way in which the Peace Institute builds the bridge between science and politics is the sharing of knowledge, research results and opinions. When the Institute itself takes the initiative of publishing research results, it always focuses on political players. For example, it involves them in seminars that facilitate the exchange of ideas and dialogue about research. In addition, researchers often take part in conferences or consultation forums where social or political problems are discussed. The Peace Institute sees the press as an important

channel of communication with stakeholders and the public at large. The Institute does not, however, indulge in naming and shaming but gives carefully balanced reviews of important or interesting news.

When the media focuses on study results or when experts find and name problems, a political debate may ensue. Now and then a political response will follow in the form of amendments to the policy pursued.

But policy-makers don't just react to the findings of researchers; sometimes they actively seek answers from scientists by themselves. Thus, in 2015 the Peace Institute responded to a call from the European Commission to submit a research proposal on the fight against illicit weapons trafficking. Financing for the proposal has been approved, and the Institute will deliver a research report at the end of 2017.

Sometimes politicians also bridge the gap from their own areas of work by issuing specific research or evaluation assignments. The President of the Flemish Parliament asked the Peace Institute to evaluate the decree on the Memorial to Flemish Emancipation and Peace, better known as the Yser Tower. In addition, the Foreign Policy Commission of the Flemish Parliament issued an assignment to undertake a comparative study of legislation and policy regarding arms export controls in various European Member States. Finally, the expertise of the staff is also mobilised at hearings. For example, in 2016 the Chamber of Representatives invited staff of the Institute to contribute to debates on the fight against illicit arms trafficking and on government transparency on contacts with lobbyists in the purchase of military equipment.

Independence and impartiality are crucial for such work. The core values of the institute are *expertise* (speaking from knowledge and professionalism), *reliability* (working with awareness of quality), *commitment* (solidarity with society) and *integrity*. Because of our parliamentary links, our mission is also very specific: *"In order to work towards a more peaceful society, in our country and throughout the world, we have to analyse peace issues in depth and, after an open debate, take the necessary measures. The Peace Institute is responsible for providing in-depth analyses, informing and organising debates, and pressing for measures to promote peace and the prevention of violence."*

So far, I have outlined what the tension between science and politics means for the work of the Flemish Peace Institute. The bridging dilemma of policy-oriented research, however, is more widely relevant. There are a number of aspects that in any case seem crucial for preserving the gap between power and science, even though it must be bridged. Firstly, the division of roles must clearly be safeguarded: political responsibility is a matter for policy-makers, whereas scientists, experts and researchers can inspire, support and evaluate, without bearing final responsibility for the use of their work. If their findings are distorted, the debate on them will certainly belong in the public sphere. Secondly, pluralism is a decisive factor in the quality of research. Various

disciplines can throw light on the challenges; various kinds of expertise are relevant for preparing and evaluating policy; differing perspectives and philosophies can contribute towards solutions. Finally, it is always wise to consider alternatives. TINA ('there is no alternative') is a poor guide for making decisions.

Politics is the domain not just of the facts but also of judgement and conviction. The Flemish Peace Institute is happy to provide interpretations of the facts in the case of peace-related policy issues, but it is up to the politicians to get the debate rolling and make choices. The debate could be a hard-fought contest, but lying is out of the question. Meanwhile, the paradox still remains. Both scientists and politicians will have to struggle with it.

***“Ten years after Hans Van Themsche,
the fight against gun violence must
now, more than ever, be taken to the
fight against the illegal circuit. ,,”***

Nils Duquet,
Researcher

In Knack, 16 May 2016

THE PEACE INSTITUTE 2016 IN FIGURES

7

Research publications of the institute

4

Advices based on research

7

Activities organised, with more than 600 attendees

36

Substantive contributions at Flemish and international forums

9

Newsletters and messages to 1566 contacts

17,219

Visits to www.FlemishPeaceInstitute.eu

97

Speaking engagements or mentions in the media

OVERVIEW ADVICES IN 2016

Advice on combating illicit firearms in Belgium 07/01/2016

Advice on the Yser Tower, recognised by decree of 15 July 2011 as a memorial to Flemish Emancipation and Peace 04/07/2016

Advice on the annual report of the Government of Flanders on the arms trade in 2015 05/07/2016

Advice on temporary trade restrictions for exports of military equipment, civilian firearms, munitions and law enforcement equipment 06/10/2016





YEARLY EVALUATION REPORT 2016 OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

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

Since the Scientific Council's decision to change the assessment procedure in 2016, the evaluation is conducted 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 than on their overall relevance, with special attention to the broader context of the Institute's research streams. The Scientific Council notes that the new procedure has been working well.

As in previous years, the Scientific Council encourages publications in external forums but does not evaluate these. However, the Scientific Council took note of the general high quality of the publications by staff members of the Flemish Peace Institute.

While the evaluation report relies on Institute publications as a measure of this quality, the Scientific Council notes the Institute's numerous additional activities, including its own seminars and lectures, and contributions by its researchers at other events. The Scientific Council notes that the positive development of increasing and broadening the Institute's range continues. Highlights in the period under review include Tomas Baum's participation in a roundtable on the arms trade and European security on the fringes at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy in The Hague, Nils Duquet's contribution at the 'Sixth Regional SALW Commissions Meeting' organised by SEESAC/UNDP in Becici (Montenegro) and Diederik Cops' participation in a roundtable with Central American Parliamentarians on the Arms Trade Treaty that was organised by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Brussels.

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

THE ARMS TRADE AND THE USE OF ARMS

Research on the arms trade and on arms production has been the Institute's core concern since its establishment. This has been reflected in the high number of publications on these topics in previous years and also in 2016.

In 2016, the Institute published its yearly report on the Flemish foreign arms trade for the previous year (2015). These reports have been a unique and highly valuable resource for everyone interested in the development of the arms trade in Flanders. As a comprehensive collection of relevant facts and figures, they provide the basis for further research on the topic. The Scientific Council notes and welcomes the Institute's plans to replace the annual report with an annual fact sheet and an annual report that focuses on one topic of particular relevance.

The Institute also published its annual advisory note on the Flemish arms trade, which has been an obligation under the founding decree. The 2016 advisory note echoes several points of concern that had been made in previous years as well, especially the high percentage of licences with unknown end users, the shift from *ex ante* to *ex post* control and the use of general licences.

In 2016, the Flemish Peace Institute also published the results of a large benchmark study that compares arms export policies as well as licencing and reporting procedures in Flanders, Germany, France, the UK, the Netherlands, Hungary, Portugal and Sweden. The Scientific Council congratulates the Peace Institute on this unique collection of highly valuable data and a comprehensive, methodologically sound and highly informative report that is relevant to a broad audience within and beyond Belgium. The Scientific Council also welcomes the Peace Institute's decision to translate the report into English and to aim at presentation and distribution to a broad range of stakeholders.

The Scientific Council noted already in its previous report that the Institute's investments into research on firearms in Belgium and the European Union have begun to pay off. The most visible sign is the acquisition of external funding and the Peace Institute's lead role in the 'Studying the Acquisition of Illicit Firearms by Terrorists in Europe (SAFTE)' project. This is a major achievement, and the Scientific Council congratulates the Flemish Peace Institute for it. In 2016, an additional report, available both in Dutch and in English, on the illegal gun market further confirms the Scientific Council's assessment that firearms have become an important and viable line of research.

The research in this cluster also informed presentations and the organisations of events for many different stakeholders such as the government experts, members of parliament, academics, industry representatives and campaigners.

DEALING WITH CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN SOCIETY

There have been some fluctuations in the clusters not dealing with the arms trade. The Scientific Council encourages the Institute to nurture these clusters alongside the very successful and established one on the trade in and use of arms. The precise profile of

these clusters is one of the most important strategic choices the Institute has to make, and the Scientific Council is happy to follow up on the issue.

The research line on commemoration was less visible in terms of publications in 2015. In 2016, a report and an advice have been published. The report on the Yser Tower marks the culmination of many years of research into the commemoration of World War I. The Scientific Council is impressed by the way in which the report by Maarten Van Alstein addresses a highly sensitive and complex issue in a very solid way. Main findings of the report are also taken up in the advice on the matter, which the Institute also published in 2016.

For the Institute's research on (de)radicalisation, 2016 was a year of preparation for publications expected in 2017 and 2018. Although the Scientific Council has not reviewed any publications in this cluster, it has discussed work in progress with the scholars involved and considers this line of research promising. The Scientific Council considers the research on (de)radicalisation to be of considerable importance for public debate and policy-making in Belgium and beyond. The Council encourages active outreach and networking and looks forward to seeing this line of research mature and gain visibility in future publications.

Dr. Wolfgang Wagner,
Chair of the Scientific Council of the Flemish Peace Institute

The Flemish Peace Institute in 2016: organization and staff

The Founding Act: The guidelines for the Flemish Peace Institute

In the Founding Act of the Flemish Peace Institute (7 May 2004), the Flemish Parliament set out four tasks for this parliametary institution: (1) conducting fundamental and policy relevant research, (2) collecting information sources and making them available, (3) providing information and education and 4) advising the parliament and the government.

Peace research, covering both fundamental scientific research and research that responds to current events, is the primary task of the Flemish Peace Institute. This

research is designed to contribute to the promotion of peaceful and equitable solutions to conflicts and to the establishment of conditions for lasting peace.

The Flemish Peace Institute also has the task of informing the Flemish Parliament, civil society and the public about peace and the prevention of violence, and about the results of research it carries out. The Institute is also tasked with creating forums where experts, policy-makers and members of civil society can meet with each other and discuss questions of peace.

Finally, the Flemish Peace Institute formulates general or specific advice, either on its own initiative or at the request of the



Flemish Parliament. The Flemish Parliament Act explicitly defines the Institute's advisory function to the Flemish Parliament with regard to the annual report of the Government of Flanders on the arms trade, but Parliament can also call upon the expertise of the Flemish Peace Institute in other matters. The Flemish Peace Institute itself can formulate advice based on its research at any time.

Target audience and mission

The fourfold mission of the Flemish Peace Institute targets a broad audience. As a para-parliamentary institution, the

Institute primarily serves the Flemish Parliament, providing support in the execution of its core duties. Among other tasks, the Flemish Peace Institute assists the Flemish Parliament in drawing up decrees and in the effective monitoring and oversight of executive action with regard to the import, export and transit of arms, fire arms regulation and dealing with conflict and violence in society.

Through its Board of Directors, the Peace Institute keeps a finger on the pulse of the broader social environment in Flanders – employers, workers, academia, peace movements and political parties.



The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Flemish Peace Institute is composed of 19 members from various sectors of Flemish civil society. The members hold a five-year mandate and are appointed by the Flemish Parliament. To ensure that the Peace Institute is an independent institute with a broad basis and the required expertise, the Founding Act provided for a balanced representation: six members serving in their own name who have been nominated by the parties in the Flemish Parliament, three members recommended by the Flemish Inter-university Council, three members recommended by a voluntary cooperative partnership of Dutch-language peace organizations, and four members recommended by the Flanders Social and Economic Council. The Board of Directors, thus constituted, further co-opts three more members. The principle of balanced representation between men and women in advisory and administrative bodies is applied in the composition of the Board of Directors.

Ms Mieke Van Hecke is the chairperson of the Board, Mr Dirk Rochtus is vice-chair.

The composition of the Board of Directors in 2016 was as follows:

For the political parties:

Raf Burm
Annemie Charlier
Axel Delvoie
Dirk Rochtus (vice-chair)
Reinhilde Van Moer
Diane Verstraeten

For VLIR (Flemish Inter-University Council):

Prof. Berber Bevernage
Prof. Ann Pauwels
Prof. Tom Sauer

For the peace movements:

Philippe Haeyaert
Brigitte Herremans
Bram Vranken

For SERV

(Flanders Social and Economic Council):

Jan Boulogne
Patrick Develtere
Els Dirix
Steven Luys

Co-opted:

Khalid Benhaddou
Filip Reyniers
Mieke Van Hecke (chair)

The Scientific Council

As scientific research constitutes one of the basic pillars sustaining the activities of the Flemish Peace Institute, the Founding Act provided for a Scientific Council that offers substantive support to the Board of Directors and the Scientific Secretariat in their research activities. As an advisory body of international composition, the Scientific Council evaluates the quality of the Flemish Peace Institute's research and advises the Board of Directors and the Scientific Secretariat on important trends in research regarding peace and security. In addition, given its expertise, it may also be consulted in the course of ongoing research.

The Scientific Council is composed of the Chair of the Board of Directors, the Director of the Flemish Peace Institute and eight national and international specialists selected from academic circles and NGOs. The Board of Directors appoints the members of the Scientific Council for a term of five years, and the Scientific Council usually meets twice a year.

The Scientific Council in 2016 consisted of the following members:

Doctor Sybille Bauer – Director of the Dual-use and Arms Trade Control Programme of SIPRI

Prof. J. Peter Burgess – Professor at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris and Adjunct Professor at the University of Copenhagen

Prof. Huub Dijstelbloem – Professor of Philosophy of Science and Politics at the University of Amsterdam

Prof. Elise Féron – University researcher and lecturer at the University of Tampere (Tampere Peace Research Institute)

Prof. Keith Krause – Professor at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva

Doctor Marcel Maussen – Assistant Professor at the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies of the University of Amsterdam

Prof. Antoon Vandevelde – Professor of Philosophy at the Centre for Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy of the University of Leuven

Prof. Wolfgang Wagner – Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit (Free University) Amsterdam (VU)

Ms. Alyson Bailes, former Chair of the Scientific Advisory Council, died in April 2016. After a long career as a British diplomat, she became Director of SIPRI and then lectured at the University of Iceland. Alyson was a personality – highly intelligent, exceptionally caring and generous. From the very beginning she supported the work of Peace Institute in word and deed. We remember her with gratitude and continue with our work, which she wholeheartedly supported.

The Scientific Secretariat

The Scientific Secretariat is the operational centre of the Flemish Peace Institute. The researchers work in the offices of the House of Flemish Representatives, building up the documentation centre and preparing advisory notes.

The Secretariat was composed of the following members in 2016:

Director

Tomas Baum

Researchers

Lore Colaert
Diederik Cops
Nils Duquet
Gregory Gourdin
Maarten Van Alstein

Communication

Wies De Graeve (until June 2016)
Els Roger (as of September 2016)

Office Manager

Margarida Ferro

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“Peaceful policy needs imagination. Not to dream, but to come up with practical solutions for situations riddled with conflict and incapacity.”

Tomas Baum,
Director

In a lecture for the ECPR conference in Prague.

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The Flemish Peace Institute is an independent institute dedicated
to peace research and hosted by the Flemish Parliament.