

'EU the most successful example of peacebuilding ever achieved in world history': OPINION

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OPINION: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) warmly congratulates the European Union, and all its citizens, on being awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize.

On two occasions—after the convulsion in the international system caused by World War II and the upheaval caused by the end of the cold war—closer cooperation in the framework of what has become the EU was an unequivocal statement that Europe is committed to peace and security between its member states.

The EU is based on core European values of peaceful coexistence, democracy and cooperation, rather than nationalism and protectionism. Today's strong relationship between the historical contenders France and Germany, as well as between former cold war adversaries, are two striking examples of this.

At a moment of rising economic and political uncertainty within the EU and unfolding violent conflicts and humanitarian crises on its doorstep, the decision of the Nobel Committee is a valuable reminder of the EU's purpose and positive achievements.

There has not been an armed conflict between members of the EU (or its forerunners) since the end of World War II, building domestic peace for over 500 million EU citizens.

'The awarding of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize reminds us that the European Union is the most successful example of peacebuilding ever achieved in world history,' stated Tilman Brück, SIPRI's incoming director.

'However, the European Union must come to terms with its increased global responsibilities and the urgent need for more effective European institutions in the fields of international peace and security.

'To be relevant for its citizens and to become a significant global player, the European Union must achieve peace and prosperity abroad as well as at home.'

Facts on EU:



Arms embargoes

The EU currently has 19 arms embargoes in force, 7 of them with no UN counterpart.

Arms exports

In the period 2007-2011, the USA was the largest exporter of major weapons, accounting for 30 per cent of the volume of exports. However, in the same period, EU members states' combined exports made up 32 per cent of the volume of global export of major weapons. Six of the top 10 exporters in the period were EU member states (Germany, France, UK, Spain, Netherlands, Italy).

Arms production

28 of the top 100 arms-producing and military services companies in 2010 (ranked by arms sales in 2010 and excluding China) had their headquarters in an EU member state or were trans-European (EADS).

Military expenditure

The combined military spending of the EU member states in 2011 was 293 billion in current US dollars. Spending by the EU has gradually declined since its post cold-war peak in 2009: \$294 billion (constant 2010 dollars) in 2009, 279 billion (constant 2010 dollars) in 2010, and 271 billion (constant 2010 dollars) in 2011.

Peace operations

As of October 2012, the EU deployed 14 peace operations.

SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public. SIPRI is named as one of the world's leading think tanks according to the international 'Think Tank Index'.