

## **Press Release ICAN Europe**

**Our organisations, European partners organizations of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), are alarmed by the dangerous and proliferating rhetoric from some of our heads of states and governments in favour of a Franco-British nuclear umbrella. This dynamic undermines decades of European commitments to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and international law, exposing a deep hypocrisy. On one day, these states claim to uphold the international security architecture, namely the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); on the next, they openly debate nuclear armament. Their efforts to condemn others' nuclear threats ring more hollow by the day. Needless to say, if the projects go ahead, they will decrease security for Europeans and, in fact, for all states.**

We are witnessing a surge in rhetoric around portraying nuclear weapons as a security strategy in our European countries. However, we share the understanding that nuclear deterrence can never be a responsible or sustainable security strategy. Nuclear deterrence is not a solution, it is part of the problem. It inherently means the constant readiness, ability and threats to commit mass murder against civilian populations. This is a cynical understanding of security. It is condemnable when any state, but especially those who claim to defend and promote democracy, human rights and international humanitarian law, speak about risking civilian lives and livelihoods.

### ***Europe is opening the door to proliferation***

European governments have long positioned themselves as defenders of international law, including international humanitarian law, therefore strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). They have argued that reduction in nuclear weapons stockpiles and promotion of arms control measures are evidence of their commitment to the NPT. Now, on the day of the 55th anniversary of the NPT, President Macron announced to open the door to an European nuclear umbrella, thereby breaking the spirit of the very same Treaty.

Normalising nuclear weapons and weakening the international security architecture is a step in the wrong direction, especially today when the risk of nuclear war is higher than ever. All states should be strengthening international norms against nuclear weapons—not weakening them. If European states weaken their stance on nuclear weapons, what message does that send to the rest of the world? And how can they credibly oppose nuclear posturing by Russia or others while considering similar steps themselves?

### ***European states should take well-considered steps instead of panicking***

In this year of the 80th commemoration of the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we are experiencing a debate that is happening far too quickly, ignoring opposing voices and the

chain reaction of decisions: countering reactions by other states, the breakdown of our nuclear regime, proliferation, and the end of the nuclear taboo that has existed since 1945. It is precisely because of the challenging situation and high tensions that all states should take well-considered steps instead of panicking.

These steps require strong leadership, courage, and consistency. 800 European cities as well as the European states of Malta, Austria, Ireland, San Marino, Liechtenstein and the Holy See have already taken a principled stand by embracing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW entered into force in 2021, is currently supported by 94 states and prohibits all matters with nuclear weapons. This includes the implicit and explicit threat of use of nuclear weapons that directly impacts our collective security.

We therefore welcome the work carried out by the states parties to the TPNW that held their 3rd Meeting of States Parties at the United Nations from 3 - 7 March 2025. For the first time, states discussed legitimate security concerns that arise from the existence of nuclear weapons, challenging the myth of nuclear security.

We, as European civil society, welcome these discussions and will continue to hold our governments accountable, push for adherence to international law, and advocate for upholding human rights and for creating a safe and just world for all people. It is our collective mandate to push all European states to engage with and join the TPNW, rather than turning away from their responsibility.

### **Endorsing Organisations**

Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy (United Kingdom)

Alianza por el Desarme Nuclear (Spain)

Beati i costruttori di pace (Italy)

Forbyd Atomvåben - ICAN in Denmark

Friedenswerkstatt Mutlangen (Germany)

ICAN Austria - Kampagne zur Abschaffung von Nuklearwaffen (Österreich)

ICAN France

ICAN Finland

ICAN Germany

ICAN Norway

IPPNW Finland

IPPNW Germany

IPPNW Greece

IPPNW Norway

ICBUW (Germany)

Medact U.K (United Kingdom)

Medact Scotland  
Nature Friends Greece  
Nei Til Atomvåpen (Norway)  
Norwegian People's Aid (Norway)  
NVMP Netherlands  
Ohne Rüstung Leben (Germany)  
Pax Christi Vlaanderen (Belgium)  
PAX for Peace (Netherland )  
Peace Union of Finland  
Physicians for Social Responsibility (Finland)  
Rete italiana Pace e Disarmo (Italy)  
Secure Scotland  
Swedish Physicians against Nuclear Weapons  
Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society  
Technology for Life Finland  
Trident Ploughshares (United Kingdom)  
UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities  
Vrede vzw (Belgium)  
World Without Wars and Violence (Greece)