

Interview Harald Müller: award-winning member of the EUNPD Consortium



Harald Müller is the former director, and now associate fellow, at PRIF and Supervisor of Peace Research Centre Prague, Charles University. He served as Co-chair of the Working Group on Peace and Conflict Research of the German Foreign Office (1999-2016), Vice-president of the EU Consortium for Non-Proliferation (2011-2016), and member of German delegations to NPT Review Conferences (1995-2015). He was also member and chair of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters (1999-2005) and member of the IAEA Expert Group on Multilateral Nuclear Arrangements (2004/5). He holds a Ph.D. in international relations from the Goethe University Frankfurt, where he taught as Prof. for International Relations 1999-2016. In 2019, he was honored with the Thérèse Delpech Memorial Award.

Congratulations for being the first European to win the prestigious [Thérèse Delpech Memorial Award](#). The award recognizes both your personal commitment and the work you have conducted at The Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) in the field of nuclear policy. Could you tell us more about your work and PRIF's main research activities on arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament?

Thanks for the kind words! I wrote my first piece on proliferation in 1977, when the debate on the plutonium economy raged in Germany. I turned to the European question in 1984, when I was hired as scientific director for a study on European non-proliferation policy – which did not exist at that time – by the Brussels Center for European Policy Studies. Since then, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament has been my main focus. At PRIF I headed a research group which covered the whole field of arms control: WMD, conventional arms, humanitarian arms control. In the nuclear field, we conducted research over the years on export controls, compliance and enforcement, disarmament strategies, conditions to achieve complete nuclear disarmament, security in a nuclear weapon free world, a Middle East nuclear weapon free zone, dynamics in the non-proliferation regime, inter alia. We also played advisory roles: I served in the German delegation to NPT conferences from 1995 to 2015, on the UN Secretary's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters 1999-2005, and, as a cofounder and Vice-President of the EU Consortium in the years 2011-2016.

One of your projects specifically looks at how ["To Save Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation"](#) to avert the mounting risk of new arms races. What approaches and practical measures can be adopted towards that end?

It is no longer a risk only, it is taking place. Differently from the Cold War, today's arms race is not bilateral, but multilateral, involving the US, China and Russia at the core, and India and Pakistan at the periphery. Today's arms

race shows a close mixing up of nuclear and non-nuclear developments which makes it complex, more unstable, and harder to manage via arms control. What is needed is a combination of bilateral understandings between the Russians and the Americans, starting with the extension of NewStart, and a new attempt to stop competition in the field of intermediate ballistic and cruise missiles. Washington and Moscow should also make a joint effort to persuade other owners of delivery systems (China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Israel) to accept some restraints on their own programs. All nuclear weapon states should declare upper limits for the number of their warheads and delivery systems in order to ensure predictability. Measures for de-alerting and other stabilization and confidence-building steps could follow.

What role can the EU play in reinvigorating multilateral negotiations and in preventing a new WMD, conventional, or even asymmetric arms race? How to smooth out the current transatlantic divergences and avoid the damages to international security stemming from unilateral decisions?

The EU is today the main pillar for multilateralism and a rule-based arms control and non-proliferation order. Even at a time of big internal divergences, this common worldview keeps Europeans closer together. The EU has to keep its course, that is, neither succumb to the unpredictable fancies of the US President nor tolerate passively the attempts by the US, Russia and China, to divide Europe. It is essential that fundamental divergences within the EU between supporters of the nuclear Ban Treaty and those relying on deterrence be bridged despite all difficulties. Mutual respect and the explicit understanding that all share the overarching common objectives – preventing nuclear war, nuclear terrorism and proliferation, and pursuing a nuclear weapon free world as the final goal – should provide enough common ground to agree on specific arms control steps and to take a clear and pro-active position in the present NPT review cycle.

The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has spurred a fierce international debate. This Op-Ed discusses the Treaty's political significance. The previous issue hosted an alternative view on the matter.

The TPNW: strategic concern or political posturing?

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) remains a divisive issue within the EU.

Only two EU countries can be counted as steadfast supporters of the Treaty: Austria and Ireland. Long-standing promoters of nuclear disarmament, they argue that the TPNW should be seen as part of a wider effort to stigmatize nuclear weapons. Cyprus and Malta, which signed the TPNW, have not moved towards ratification yet. The Swedish government, after commissioning an inquiry that has ultimately underlined the Treaty content's weaknesses, is expected to make an official decision on whether to join the treaty in the next few months. In other EU countries, the signature and ratification of the TPNW have not been debated at the governmental level. However, some have publicly stated that the treaty does not meet their security requirements or clash with their NATO obligations. Most European States also lament the TPNW's lack of a withdrawal clause, and argue that the treaty does not place enough emphasis on strict adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to the safeguards regime. Some critics claim that the TPNW's legal framework is alternative to, and less constraining than, the NPT. In this sense, they argue, the TPNW may damage the non-proliferation regime and have a paralyzing effect on the NPT review process.

In some EU States, backers of the TPNW seem more motivated by domestic ideological reasons than by a genuine support for disarmament. This is the case of both far-left parties (Podemos in Spain, Die Linke in Germany, the Socialist Party in the Netherlands) and far-right parties (Alternative for Germany), which favour the Treaty as a way to oppose NATO. In the UK, support for the Treaty tends to be interlaced with the question of the independence of Scotland, with pro-independence parties claiming Scotland's sovereign right to be non-nuclear-armed as a means to campaigning for independence. Finally, Italy's 5 Star Movement, which used to promote the TPNW as part of its anti-US and pacifist rhetoric, has been silent about the issue since it entered the ruling coalition.

The radical and populist parties' support for the TPNW entails the risk that the future of the Treaty may not depend on well-thought-of debates about its security implications, but on unpredictable political dynamics.

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Consortium News

Panel Discussion: Reducing The Firepower Of Criminals and Terrorists: The New EU Strategy To Combat The Illicit Proliferation Of Firearms

On 4 March 2019, the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium (EUNPDC), in cooperation with The Flemish Peace Institute, organised a panel discussion on “reducing the firepower of criminals and terrorists”. The event discussed the new [EU strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons \(SALW\) and their ammunition](#), and launched the latest EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Paper on “[The 2018 EU SALW Strategy: towards an integrated and comprehensive approach](#)”.

The panel consisted of Nils Duquet (Flemish Peace Institute), Frank Meussen (EEAS) and Dr Sibylle Bauer (Chair of the EUNPDC and Director of Studies for Armament and Disarmament at SIPRI).

For further information:
[Reducing The Firepower of Criminals and Terrorists](#)

EU INSTITUTIONAL NEWS

The EU steps up its support for the Biological Weapons Convention

On 18 March 2019, the EU Delegation, together with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), organised a launch event for the new [EU Council Decision](#) supporting the [Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention](#) (BTWC). The Decision, which followed the deliberations of the Meeting of States Parties held in Geneva 4-7 December 2018, was adopted on 21 January 2019.

The Decision served as “an operational policy tool for providing essential follow-up and momentum to the activities undertaken [under the scopes of the BTWC]”, ensuring their sustainability and implementation. The Decision reinforces the EU commitment to the Convention and to its Implementation Support Unit, which has received EU dedicated funds since 2006. Through EU funding, over the years, the Unit has organized regional workshops and provided expert assistance to Member and non-Member States interested in strengthening national legislation, in improving biosecurity in laboratories and in planning emergency response to possible bio-threats. “27 States have since joined the Convention, and nearly all of them have either taken part in EU-funded workshops or received some other form of assistance”. The Decision also reiterates the importance of active cooperation between States, experts and national institutions with the aim of preparing countries to prevent and respond to attacks involving biological agents, building capacity and fostering biosecurity networks, and ultimately reaching universalisation.

For more information:

[EU steps up its support for the Biological Weapons Convention](#)
[Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological \(Biological\) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction](#)

NETWORK NEWS

The EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium takes part to the 2019 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference



For the first time since its establishment, the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium held a booth at and participated in the Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference, the biennial nuclear conference organized by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The Conference, this year held in Washington DC on 11-12 March 2019, is an important international gathering that brings together experts and officials from several countries and international organizations to debate pressing challenges in nuclear non-proliferation, arms control, disarmament, deterrence, energy, and security. During the Conference, Harald Müller, former director of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), was awarded with the [2019 Thérèse Delpech Memorial Award](#). The prize is granted, every other year, to an individual “who has rendered exceptional service to the nongovernmental nuclear policy community”. Harald Müller, who is now associate fellow at PRIF - one of the six think tanks of the EUNDP Consortium - was the first non-American to receive the prize.

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