



Zusammenkunft aller
Physik-Fachschaften

Resolution: No to dual-use orientation of research funding

The “Joint Communication on the European Economic Security Strategy”¹ outlines an EU strategy for a situation of bloc confrontation and growing political and military rivalry. The recent white paper of the European Commission on Dual Use research funding² derives from this a reorientation of EU civilian research funding, which is specifically about offering incentives for explicit dual-use research. The goal is to fill the technological gaps that make the European militaries vulnerable in case of an economic war.

As emphasized by the German Rectors’ Conference³ and others, the focus on dual use threatens to disrupt already endangered international cooperation. Furthermore, this encourages the tendency to divert funds for urgently needed civilian research to the military, as has already happened recently when Horizon Europe did not receive 2.1 billion euros. Conversely, military research does not structurally benefit the civilian sector because its results are not public. For example, there are only plans to focus the civilian research funding program Horizon Europe on dual use, but not the military research fund (EDF).

More importantly, by becoming more dependent on military-oriented funding, universities are jeopardizing their ability to intervene critically in the societal debate on war and peace. Research into technologies for destruction and killing is normalized and the civilian and peaceful orientation, as established in more than 70 German universities to date, is being structurally undermined.

Above all, however, universities are becoming part of an economic and military arms race that has considerable potential for escalation (over 12,000 nuclear warheads are stored worldwide) and, in principle, is devouring ever greater societal resources that are all the more urgently needed for the social and sustainable development of the EU in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The plans outlined in the white paper disregard the fact that global problems can only be solved cooperatively and that the EU is well placed to initiate a break in the arms race. It is of central importance that science contributes to de-escalation and disarmament and is not instrumentalized by geopolitical power struggles.

¹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023JC0020>

²On options for enhancing support for research and development involving technologies with dual-use potential

³https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14060-RD-on-dual-use-technologies-options-for-support/F3464775_en

We, therefore, call on the EU to continue to consistently focus the Horizon Europe research funding program on civilian science in cooperation with rival power blocs and the realization of the SDGs instead of dual use.

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at the ZaPF in Kiel.