

## **Communiqué of the Founding Conference of the European Network for Peace and Human Rights**

*Some 300 people from more than 30 countries attended the launch conference of the European Network for Peace and Human Rights which took place at the European Parliament in Brussels on 31 January/1 February 2002.*

We come from many different countries, municipalities and organisations. We recognise that all of us live in a world of fear and insecurity. We hold in common the belief that the first aim in all disputes should be to find solutions which build and secure peace, guarantee human rights, and protect the environment.

A better world is possible. We call for new concepts of security, nuclear disarmament, welfare not warfare, education for peace, and peaceful means of overcoming conflict through a reformed and strengthened United Nations.

But we face a turning point. We are in a situation where the greatest military and economic power on earth has declared war on its enemies as it perceives them. This it has done with the support of most European Governments. We express our profound sympathy for all victims of terrorism, including state terror. But war cannot be the way to defeat terror. The United States has shown itself ready to unleash the most prodigious weapons of destruction against human beings and their means of livelihood. It is extending its power from land, sea and air into space and information to achieve what its commanders call 'full spectrum dominance', at the same time that it pressures others to support its actions.

We refuse to do that, and call upon our fellow Europeans to join with us in our refusal to become accomplices in such a development.

We have special responsibilities in Europe to work for peace, for the dissolution of NATO rather than its expansion, and for peaceful development instead of the militarisation of the European Union. This is not only because of our relative wealth, but also because of our history of internal warfare and external aggression.

We have now established a European Network for Peace and Human Rights, and look forward to its extension. We recognise the

growing movements of protest throughout the world, many of them represented at our founding convention – peace workers, anti-nuclear and anti-militarist activists, environmental campaigners, religious groups, women’s movements, labour movements, relief agencies, fair traders, indigenous peoples’ organisations, human rights and other political organisations, including all those who have joined in protest at the corporate globalisation of trade, services, culture and the resurgent military-industrial complex.

We ask them to join together with others in resistance to military solutions and in the search for peace and global justice. Peace, democracy, and a safe environment are necessary for the world our children will inherit: war is waste and waste is the greatest environmental crime; democracy depends on free and unlimited discussion, and on the full participation of women, men and youth; allocation of resources that gives more to the military than to health and education prevents justice. It is for these reasons and more that it is necessary to create a movement for sustainable peace and justice.

*As a matter of urgency, we strive to:*

Open a dialogue with the many movements in the United States working for peace and seek an exchange of delegations;

Create an active dialogue with peace and human rights movements in the new war zones of the Middle East, opposing violence and injustice throughout the region of West Asia and Northern Africa, including Israel’s occupation and settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and other Arab territories; and to support the immediate enforcement of the Fourth Geneva Convention as an essential first step towards a just and lasting peace, as well as the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and independent statehood;

Give support to those movements campaigning for peace in South Asia;

Give support to prisoners of conscience; and to those campaigning for the right to conscientious objection to military service and taxation;

Strengthen and reform the United Nations system, which could be the best answer for Europe and a uniting factor in the struggle against United States hegemony without being anti-American.

Strengthen our links with the World Social Movement, currently meeting in Porto Alegre in Brazil, in its opposition to global militarism and support for human rights, sustainable development and democracy.

To further these ends we are establishing a representative liaison committee to draw up detailed plans, find the necessary resources, and propose co-ordinated actions throughout Europe.

*Brussels, 1 February 2002*