

ISDE Europe: Health, Peace and Responsibility at the Core of European Action

ISDE Europe – the European section of the International Society of Doctors for the Environment – reaffirms its urgent call for European institutions to place the protection of public health and the promotion of peace at the centre of their political agenda.

In the current global context, marked by escalating geopolitical tensions and increasing military expenditure, ISDE Europe stresses that global health is inseparable from political, economic and military decisions. Policies that contribute to conflict dynamics have direct and indirect impacts on population health, exacerbating inequalities, humanitarian crises and the fragility of healthcare systems.

As a major global actor, the European Union bears a significant responsibility to guide its external and internal policies towards conflict prevention, respect for international law and the promotion of sustainable development. The ongoing increase in military spending, while healthcare systems across Europe continue to face structural challenges, represents a political choice with profound consequences for public health.

ISDE Europe emphasizes that investing in public health systems, prevention, research and resilience is essential to ensuring real security for populations. Conversely, military escalation diverts critical resources away from these priorities, increasing health risks and undermining long-term societal stability.

ISDE Europe therefore calls on European institutions to:

- refrain from any direct or indirect contribution to military escalation;
- actively promote diplomatic, multilateral and peace-oriented initiatives;
- prioritize investment in healthcare systems, prevention and public health infrastructure;
- systematically integrate health impact assessments into foreign and security policies;
- support environmental and climate policies that address the root causes of conflict.

At a time of intersecting crises – health, environmental and social – an integrated approach is urgently needed, recognizing peace as a fundamental determinant of health.

ISDE Europe reaffirms its commitment to advancing a vision of health that encompasses environmental justice, international cooperation and conflict prevention as essential components of sustainable well-being.

Health cannot be separated from peace. Political choices made today will shape the health and future of generations to come.