

Reinhard Bütikofer, MEP
Bodil Valero, MEP
Norica Nicolai, MEP
Ana Maria Gomes, MEP
Fabio Massimo Castaldo, MEP



Ms Federica Mogherini
Vice-President of the European Commission/
High Representative of the Union for
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
European External Action Service
Rue de la Loi, 200
B - 1049 Brussels

17 October 2018

Dear Vice-President/High Representative,

We want to thank you again for the fruitful plenary debate we had on 11 September 2018 in Strasbourg. We believe that how to regulate lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) is a key question for humankind. It is obvious that now is the time to take decisions and draw a clear line of what is acceptable in order to prevent algorithms from making life and death decisions in the very near future.

When listening to you on 11 September in Strasbourg we were very pleased to hear you say that “humans should always make the decisions on the use of lethal force, and always exert sufficient control over lethal weapons systems”. We fully subscribe to this and are proud to say that, backed by 566 elected members, Parliament has voted in favour of a text which demands legal guarantees with respect to such weapons systems. The 566 MEPs strongly recommend “the start of international negotiations on a legally binding instrument prohibiting lethal autonomous weapon systems”.

We were also very interested to hear that you are already preparing activities in this field, in particular by the setting up of a “tech panel” with 14 tech leaders from different backgrounds and expertise. We would like to ask you if it is possible to also include an NGO representative from the Campaign To Stop Killer Robots, such as PAX in the Netherlands or Human Rights Watch, which coordinates the campaign. This campaign represents 85 international, regional, and national non-governmental organizations in 40 countries. In addition, we would encourage you to include representatives of academia. In this respect, we can highly recommend iPRAW, which is an independent, interdisciplinary group of scientists working on the issue of robotics in general, and lethal autonomous weapons systems specifically. iPRAW aims at supporting the current debate within the UN CCW with scientifically grounded information and recommendations.¹

We would like to urge you to consider this prior to bringing the issue to the table of the Defence Ministers in one of the next Council meetings.

¹ iPRAW is financially supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.

In a similar vein, we would like to strongly encourage you as head of the European Defence Agency, to also invite a Campaign To Stop Killer Robots and an iPRAW representative to address this year's EDA annual conference on "From Unmanned to Autonomous Systems: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities".

We thank you very much in advance and await your response.

Yours sincerely,

Reinhard Bütikofer, MEP



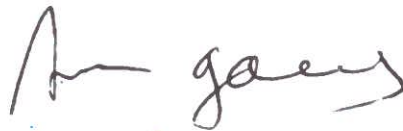
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