

Expanding Nuclear Risks

The 2025 edition of this 'Nuclear Europe' map is rather more crowded than the original, which was published in *END Info 19* (September 2020). Much has changed since and some of it was entirely predictable following the collapse of the INF Treaty. The nuclear-bootprint has expanded across Europe and along with the expansion has come an intensification: there are more nuclear weapons over a greater geographical area and the technology and capabilities have increased. The replacement of existing US nuclear bombs in Europe with the B61-12 nuclear gravity bomb is one such example. The B61-12s, unlike their predecessor bombs, will now be located in the UK. The B61-12 has a variable nuclear-yield and increased accuracy. Both elements serve to increase nuclear risks across the board. Another change since 2020 has been the expansion of nuclear alliances and nuclear arrangements within alliances. The UK looks set to join NATO nuclear-sharing arrangements. NATO itself has expanded to include new state members. Russian nuclear weapons now find a home in Belarus.



Still needed: A European Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone

The first version of this map was created as an aid to a new call for a 'European Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone'. The call itself was issued by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation in March 2019 as a response to the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Of course, in launching the call we drew inspiration from the 'European Nuclear Disarmament' Appeal of the 1980s (also issued by the Foundation). The 1980s Appeal came at a moment of enormous nuclear tensions and growing nuclear dangers. It grew into a genuine, Europe-wide movement that encompassed massive demonstrations and a series of Conventions that

gathered significant numbers from across geographical and political divides. These efforts propelled the nuclear powers towards agreeing the INF Treaty in 1987. The INF Treaty has now been destroyed and along with it a number of other vital treaties and agreements have been thrown on the bonfire. The 2019 call met with some positive responses and resulted in the 'Nuke Free Europe' campaign which quickly went into abeyance following the emergence of the pandemic. There are nuclear-weapon-free zones across the world. Why can't Europe have one? This map suggests a reason. It also suggests that there is an urgent need for such a zone, a need much greater than at any point since 1987. Can we build a movement to achieve such a zone? Can the call for such a zone be put into the new campaigns against European rearmament? Surely it must.