

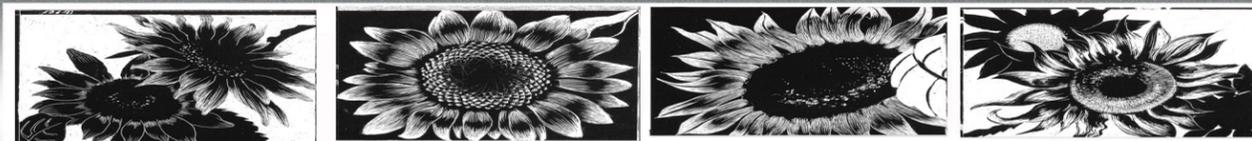


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Lawmakers Arrested on Belgian Air Base Protesting US Nuclear Weapons

Continued from cover

States; and the creation of a nuclear weapon-free zone for Europe. Kleine Brogel is one of six European air bases that deploy and train in the use of US B61 nuclear weapons.*

“To date, no state or international organization has the medical, human and logistical means that would manage the humanitarian and environmental consequences of a nuclear detonation,” Act for Peace said in a statement. “That is why it is essential for Belgium to set an example by joining gestures with words, and concretely work towards nuclear disarmament.”

Ms. Rivasi told *The Guardian*, “We are demanding the withdrawal of nuclear bombs at Kleine Brogel and also from Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. We urge all EU (European Union) member states to sign and ratify the treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. Our first objective is a Europe without nuclear arms.”

“Today, 15,000 nuclear weapons are still in circulation in the world and about 20 nukes are still present at the Kleine Brogel military base,” Rivasi told *The Irish Times*. “However, the bombs stored in Belgium have adjustable power ranging from one to 340 kilotons, or up to 26 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb. Yet everyone seems to have forgotten their presence and most importantly, their danger,” she added.

The US Air Force’s 701st Munitions Support Squadron manages the twenty B61 nuclear bombs on the base,

home to the Belgian Air Force’s 10th Tactical Wing which flies the nuclear-capable F-16s.

In a statement sent to *Newsweek*, the British-based Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament voiced its support for the action. CND General Secretary Kate Hudson said, “US nuclear weapons have no place in Europe—this isn’t a battle-ground for a nuclear war between world powers.”

“A secret bilateral agreement between a European Union Member State and the US is an imposed choice of extreme violence—imposed on the Belgian and European people. These bilateral agreements leave no room for democratic debate and genuine consideration of citizens. That is why we join activists today in civil disobedience because we believe the public interest is under threat,” Rivasi said.

Ms. Cato, who represents Cornwall and Devon, said to *The Cornwall News*, “These apocalyptic weapons should find no home in Europe. We demand that Europe’s nuclear nations immediately sign up to the landmark global Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and begin the process of decommissioning their nuclear arsenals.”

* The United States is the only government in the world that places its nuclear weapons in other countries. The other bases are in The Netherlands, Germany, Turkey and two in Italy. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the 70 to 90 US H-bombs thought to be stationed at Turkey’s Incirlik airbase have quietly been removed. Previous “nuclear sharing” agreements have ended with Britain, Greece and Canada where US nuclear weapons were formerly stationed. —**JL**



Three Members of the European Parliament climbed into the air base at Kleine Brogel in Belgium February 20 and symbolically blocked the runway, demanding the withdrawal of the US nuclear bombs stationed there. Standing with banner L-to-R were lawmakers Molly Scott Cato, Tilly Metz, and Michèle Rivasi. Photo by Act for Peace.

Four Members of E.U. Parliament Arrested Protesting US Nuclear Weapons in Belgium

“I have been arrested for breaking into a Belgian military airbase to protest against the stockpiling of American nuclear bombs.” This dramatic declaration came from Molly Scott Cato, a Green Party Member of the European Parliament (MEP) representing southwest England. Ms. Cato joined three other parliamentarians and members of the Belgian peace group *Agir Pour la Paix* (Act for Peace) in the February 20 protest at Kleine Brogel air base in eastern Belgium, “to challenge EU countries to remove US nuclear weapons from Europe.”

Ms. Cato, 55, from Bristol, and two other MEPs boldly scaled a 7-foot fence with Act for Peace members and walked directly onto the runway used by F-16 fighter jets. Holding a banner calling for a “Nuclear free zone for Europe,” they symbolically blocked the runway to demand the ouster of US nuclear weapons from Europe.

A fourth Green Party parliamentarian, Thomas Waitz from Austria, was arrested along with 12 members of Act for Peace at a simultaneous protest outside the base, *The Guardian* reported. The activists were arrested and released.

The lawmakers—Michèle Rivasi of France, Tilly Metz from Luxembourg, and Ms. Cato—all represent Green parties in their home countries, and Rivasi is the Vice-Chair of the Green Party caucus of the European Parliament. The Greens currently hold 51 of the EP’s 751 seats.

According to a press release from the Greens and the European Free Alliance, the blockaders issued three demands: the withdrawal of US nuclear bombs stationed in Europe; the ratification of the Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by all European Union Member

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