



Conversion Studies for a more peaceful world- BICC turns 20

PRESS RELEASE

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Bonn. BICC (Bonn International Center for Conversion) is celebrating its 20th anniversary on 2 April 2014. It is one of the leading peace and conflict research institutes in Germany and was founded in 1994 on the initiative of the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the former Minister President of NRW, Johannes Rau, in Bonn.

20 years ago, BICC was founded with the support of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) as a not-for-profit organization and has since then received core funding by the State. **"In the past 20 years, BICC has developed into one of the leading addresses of peace and conflict research in Germany; its knowledge is in demand both in Germany and abroad,"** stresses **Svenja Schulze**, NRW Minister for Innovation, Science and Research. **"The institute stands for applied, interdisciplinary research of a high academic standard and is a valuable asset for the research landscape of North Rhine-Westphalia. I wish BICC continued success in its important work!"** the Minister adds.

German Foreign Minister **Frank-Walter Steinmeier** also congratulates BICC on its successful work: **"For years now, the Bonn International Center for Conversion has done excellent work in fields such as civil crisis prevention, disarmament, and reintegration. With its expertise, BICC is an important partner of the German Foreign Office."**

Congratulations on its 20th anniversary have also been extended by **Dr. Hans Blix**, former Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and former Head of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission who has been accompanying BICC for many years, the Mayor of Bonn **Jürgen Nimptsch** and **Jakob Rhyner**, Director United Nations University.

Representatives from national and international peace research institutes, such as Professor **Tilmann Brück**, Director SIPRI (Stockholm Institute for Peace Research), **Kristian Berg-Harpviken**, Director PRIO (Peace Research Institute Oslo) as well as the **editors of the German annual Peace Report 2014** (Friedensgutachten) also congratulated BICC.

BICC in transition

After the end of the Cold War-that is at the time of BICC's foundation-conversion, then the civilian re-use of military resources, played an important role. Today, BICC intends to establish a new understanding of Conversion Studies in peace and conflict research, focusing on the analysis of organized violence. Professor **Conrad**

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Schetter, Director for Research at BICC, poses questions such as: **"What are 'new' wars? Which lessons have to be learned from military interventions, such as in Afghanistan? What should a responsible German arms exports policy look like?"** and has put these on the Center's agenda.

"BICC is an institute that, above all, conducts critical and problem-oriented applied research," **Conrad Schetter** stresses. This practical orientation is mirrored in its policy advice and technical advice for capacity development activities. With its Global Militarization Index (GMI), for instance, BICC has created a unique tool for assessing decisions on arms exports. In Sudan and South Sudan, for instance, BICC staff advise the respective governments on technical questions regarding demobilization and small arms control. The 2013 Global "Go-To Think Tanks" report of the University of Pennsylvania lists BICC in two categories as one of the leading think tanks worldwide.

Since its inception, BICC has been conducting research and research-based policy advice with third-party funding by various funders, such as the German Federal Foreign Office, the European Union, and foundations. **"In 2013, these funds made up more than 60 percent of BICC's financial volume,"** **Michael Dedek**, BICC Director for Administration, explains. **"The investment of the State of NRW has proven itself valuable not only in research but also in economic terms."**

On 27 and 28 October 2014, on the occasion of its anniversary, BICC will be hosting the international scientific conference "Challenges of organized violence: New research and conversion potentials" in Bonn.

For information on BICC's work, please access its **updated website** www.bicc.de