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Texts adopted - White paper on the future of European defence - Wednesday, 12 March 2025

48–61 Minuten

The European Parliament,

– having regard to Rules 136(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas over the last decade, major geopolitical shifts, amplified by the return of large-scale war to our neighbourhood, have been threatening the security of the EU, its Member States, the candidate countries and their respective citizens; whereas the EU is currently under attack, with hybrid incidents inside its borders, a large-scale war in its neighbourhood and a realignment of global powers, all presenting real risks to the security of the EU and its citizens and requiring immediate, ambitious and decisive action; whereas Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has been a watershed moment in European history; whereas Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine is widely recognised as an attack on the European peace order established after the Second World War and the global order as a whole;

B. whereas the global order is fragmenting and increasingly characterised by complex and entrenched instabilities;

C. whereas there cannot be any European security without security in its immediate neighbourhood, starting with Ukraine's capacity to resist

Russia's war of aggression;

D. whereas recent statements by members of the US administration, accompanied by the heavy pressure exerted on Ukraine by the US leadership, reflect a shift in US foreign policy as the Trump administration is proposing the normalisation of ties with Russia and it is becoming increasingly clear that Europe needs to strengthen its security and defence to be able to help Ukraine to defend itself;

E. whereas the quickest and most extensive expansion of Russia's capabilities is taking place near its borders with the West, while the EU is taking its time to enhance its defence capacity;

F. whereas China, driven by the ambition to become a global superpower, is eroding the rules-based international order by increasingly pursuing assertive foreign and hostile economic and competition policies and exporting dual-use goods deployed by Russia on the battlefield against Ukraine, thereby threatening European security and interests; whereas China is also investing tremendously in its armed forces, using its economic power to quash criticism worldwide and is striving to assert itself as the dominant power in the Indo-Pacific region; whereas China, by intensifying its confrontational, aggressive and intimidating actions against some of its neighbours, particularly in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, poses a risk to regional and global security as well as to the EU's economic interests;

G. whereas the impact of wars, terrorism, instability, insecurity, poverty and climate change in the Sahel region, north-eastern Africa and Libya poses serious risks to EU security; whereas the instability and insecurity in the southern neighbourhood and the Sahel region are closely interlinked with, and remain an ongoing challenge for, the EU's management of its external borders;

H. whereas European security is linked to stability on the African continent, and the growing presence of non-European actors is testament to the lack of sufficient security and diplomatic engagement in the region to effectively counter these challenges and protect the EU's strategic interests;

I. whereas, in the light of the worsening external environment and despite the efforts made in recent years to enhance the EU's crisis preparedness through new legislation, mechanisms and tools across various policy areas, the EU and its Member States remain vulnerable to multiple crisis scenarios;

J. whereas there is an urgent need to further reform and strengthen the EU's defence policy in the light of Ukraine's recent war experience and the use of new war technologies;

K. whereas the Member States have different military and security policies, including policies of neutrality, and such policies should be respected;

L. whereas it is in the EU's interest to see Ukraine as an integral part of a genuine European security system;

M. whereas the Black Sea has shifted from a secondary to a primary military theatre for the EU and NATO, and alongside the Baltic Sea, it has become a pivotal strategic region for European security in countering the Russian threat;

N. whereas the Arctic region is becoming increasingly important in terms of economic development and transport, while, at the same time, facing challenges linked to climate change and militarisation, as well as those resulting from increasing geopolitical competition and migration;

O. whereas as a result of investment in military equipment and

ammunition, numerous reports, notably the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis⁽¹⁾ of May 2022, have analysed a worrying capability gap in European defence;

P. whereas the Strategic Compass⁽²⁾ was mainly drafted and negotiated before 24 February 2022; whereas the Strategic Compass is a very broad strategy that provides little guidance with regards to the urgent need to accomplish defence readiness and provide deterrence and defence capabilities to prepare for the most urgent military contingencies;

Q. whereas the 2024 Draghi report on the future of European competitiveness⁽³⁾ highlighted a funding need of EUR 500 billion in European defence for the next decade, and underlines a combination of structural weaknesses affecting the competitiveness of the EU's Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), and identifies fragmentation, insufficient public defence investment and limited access to financing as obstacles to a capable EDTIB;

R. whereas the Niinistö report⁽⁴⁾ underlines the fact that the EU and its Member States are not yet fully prepared for the most severe cross-sectoral or multidimensional crisis scenarios;

S. whereas building defence capabilities and adapting them to military needs requires a common strategic culture and shared threat perception and assessment, as well as the development of solutions to be combined in doctrine and concepts;

T. whereas the EU's ability to take decisive action in response to external threats has been repeatedly hampered by the requirement for unanimity, with certain Member States and candidate countries blocking or delaying critical military aid to Ukraine and hence undermining European security;

U. whereas, in the light of the above challenges and analyses, the

President of the European Commission tasked the Commissioner for Defence and Space and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy with presenting a white paper on the future of European defence within the first 100 days of their term of office;

V. whereas Parliament and experts have been calling for a white paper on defence for more than a decade;

A historic time for European defence: ‘become a genuine security provider’

1. Considers that the EU must act urgently to ensure its own autonomous security, strengthening its partnerships with like-minded partners and significantly reducing its dependencies on non-EU countries; stresses, therefore, that the EU is now at a turning point in its history and construction; insists that a ‘business as usual’ approach is no longer an option as it would lead to the end of a safe and secure Europe; considers that the EU and its Member States must choose between joining forces and working in unison to overcome the threats and attacks on EU security, and standing alone at the mercy of aggressive adversaries and unpredictable partners;

2. Recalls that the EU is a peace project and should strive towards peace and stability, while condemning aggression; underlines that in order to achieve peace and stability, we must support Ukraine and become more resilient ourselves;

3. Stresses that Europe continues to stand firmly on the side of Ukraine as it courageously fights for our European values, and recalls its conviction that it is on the Ukrainian battlefields that the future of Europe will be decided; strongly believes that Europe is today facing the most profound military threat to its territorial integrity since the end of the Cold War;

4. Strongly believes that strengthening Europe's security and defence requires not just a simple increase in ambition and action, but a complete overhaul of the way we act and invest in our security and defence, such that from now on we plan, innovate, develop, purchase, maintain and deploy capabilities together, in a coordinated and integrated fashion, and making full use of the complementary competences of all actors in Europe, including NATO, to achieve a common European defence;

5. Believes that Russia, supported by its allies including Belarus, China, North Korea and Iran, is the most significant direct and indirect threat to the EU and its security, as well as that of EU candidate countries and partners; reiterates its condemnation, in the strongest possible terms, of Russia's unprovoked, illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine; notes, however, the need to consider fully the instability in our southern neighbourhood, the rise in Chinese military power and the increased aggressiveness of the middle powers, which appear ready to jeopardise transatlantic cooperation on common security and make a deal with the Russian aggressor at the expense of Ukrainian and European security, which are one and the same; notes that the recent actions and statements of the US administration have further increased concerns about the future stance of the US vis-à-vis Russia, NATO and the security of Europe; regrets, in this regard, the votes of the US Government, aligned with the Russian Government, in the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council on resolutions about the third anniversary of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; strongly condemns US threats against Greenland;

6. Insists that Europe must take on greater responsibilities within NATO, especially when it comes to ensuring security on the European continent;

7. Believes that diplomacy should remain a cornerstone of EU foreign

policy;

8. Reiterates its call on Türkiye, a NATO member state and EU candidate country, to abide by international law, recognise the Republic of Cyprus and immediately end the occupation and withdraw its troops from the island;

9. Underlines that the EU must now adopt a holistic and horizontal approach that integrates a defence and security dimension into most EU policies, supported by both regulatory and financial instruments and identified capability needs and gaps;

10. Believes, therefore, that the time has come for a renewed political ambition to act and turn the EU into a genuine security provider, increase the EU's defence readiness and build a true European Defence Union; recalls that the adoption of the Strategic Compass was a good starting point, but notes that its timely implementation remains necessary; welcomes the recently introduced EU defence instruments and insists on the urgent need to scale up as EU defence efforts cannot remain limited in size, fragmented in scope and lengthy in delivery; calls for a quantum leap and a new approach to defence, including strong decisions, an action plan and both short- to long-term defence investment plans; underlines that this requires vision, concreteness and shared commitments, both in the strictly military field and in the industrial, technological and intelligence sectors;

11. Deplores the reluctance of the Council and the EU Member States when it comes to addressing deep structural challenges of the European defence industrial landscape and the lack of ambition as regards cooperation at EU level between the Member States' armed forces; calls on the Member States to join forces and support a major step towards a very ambitious and comprehensive framework on defence;

12. Urges the EU to adopt a coherent and robust comprehensive framework to strengthen its security and that of its partners, better identify potential future breaking points and prevent further crises, and coordinate joint responses with its Member States similar to those used in wartime;

13. Believes that the white paper on the future of European defence should put forward concrete measures and options to the European Council so that truly groundbreaking and necessary efforts can be undertaken, differentiating between short- and long-term plans and objectives, addressing defence sector capability issues, industrial competitiveness and investment needs, and framing the overall approach to EU defence integration; urges both the Council and the Commission to identify clear and concrete priorities for the short, medium and long term, with a corresponding timeline of actions;

14. Considers that common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions and operations need to be reassessed and reviewed from this perspective; insists that the CSDP must be strengthened and made more agile, including by becoming the EU's main instrument to fight hybrid warfare, in order to fulfil its role as an insurance policy for Europe's security, as well as a power and security provider;

15. Expects the white paper on the future of European defence to identify the most pressing threats, structural risks and competitors, and define the extent to which the EU can develop contingency plans to ensure mutual support in the event of large-scale security crises, and help Europe anticipate, prepare for and deter potential aggressors and defend itself in the short and long term, in order to become a credible power and European pillar within NATO; underlines that the protection of EU land, air and maritime borders contributes to the security of the entire EU, in particular the EU's eastern border, and thus stresses that the East

Shield and Baltic Defence Line should be the flagship EU projects for fostering deterrence and overcoming potential threats from the East;

16. Calls for immediate measures to enhance the security and defence of the EU's north-eastern border with Russia and Belarus by establishing a comprehensive and resilient defence line across land, air and maritime domains to counter military and hybrid threats including energy weaponisation, infrastructure sabotage and the instrumentalisation of migration; emphasises the need to coordinate and integrate national efforts through EU regulatory and financial instruments to accelerate implementation;

17. Stresses the need to enhance capabilities and resources, while overcoming the fragmentation of the defence market; fully agrees with the Draghi report's view that the EU and its Member States must urgently decide on incentives for the EU defence industry and find creative solutions for large-scale public and private investments in security and defence;

Short-term: defending Ukraine against an existential threat to Europe's security

18. Urges the EU and its Member States to stand firmly on the side of Ukraine; recalls its conviction that it is on the Ukrainian battlefields that the future of Europe will be decided and that the trajectory of Russia's war against Ukraine will be decisively shifted; underlines that such a shift now depends almost entirely on Europe; urges the Member States, therefore, to provide more arms and ammunition to Ukraine before negotiations are concluded; warns that, if the EU were to fail in its support and Ukraine were forced to surrender, Russia would then turn against other countries, including possibly the EU Member States; calls on the EU Member States, international partners and NATO allies to lift all

restrictions on the use of Western weapons systems delivered to Ukraine against military targets in Russian territory; calls for the EU and its Member States to actively work towards maintaining and achieving the broadest possible international support for Ukraine and identifying a peaceful solution to the war that must be based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the principles of international law, accountability for war crimes and the crime of aggression, and Russian payments for the massive damage caused in Ukraine; urges the EU and its Member States to participate in establishing robust future security guarantees for Ukraine;

19. Strongly believes that the EU must further expand and improve its tailor-made training operations to respond to the needs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and, in return, create conditions for European armed forces to learn lessons and strategic practices from them; calls on the Member States to further expand training operations for the Ukrainian Armed Forces, including in Ukrainian territory;

20. Emphasises the importance of ensuring a geographically balanced distribution of defence financing in the next multiannual financial framework (MFF);

21. Urges the EU to develop a 'Ukraine strategy', outlining clear objectives for supporting Ukraine's defence capabilities and the integration of the Ukrainian DTIB into the EDTIB, and to find the necessary resources to implement such a strategy, while supporting European defence industry activities in Ukraine; proposes the allocation of a specific multi-billion euro budget to the European Defence Industry Programme's (EDIP) Ukraine Support Instrument reserved exactly for this purpose; underscores that such a Ukraine strategy must be an integral part of a 'European defence' strategy;

22. Calls for urgent financial support to ensure the timely supply of defence products through joint procurement, industrial coordination, stockpiling, access to finance for manufacturers and the expansion and modernisation of production capacities;

23. Praises the 'Danish model' for support for Ukraine, which consists of procuring defence capabilities produced directly in Ukraine; urges the EU and its Member States to strongly support this model and to make full use of its potential, as there is an underutilisation of Ukraine's defence industrial capacity, estimated at around 50 %, and it brings many advantages to both sides, such as cheaper equipment, speedier and safer logistics, and greater ease of training and maintenance;

24. Calls for a significant increase in the financing of military support for Ukraine; calls, in this regard, for the swift adoption of the next military aid package, which should be the largest to date and reflect the level of ambition this juncture calls for; calls on the EU Member States to commit at least 0,25 % of their GDP to military aid for Ukraine; condemns the veto imposed by one Member State on the functioning of the European Peace Facility; calls on the EU Member States, together with their G7 partners, to immediately seize all frozen Russian assets to serve as a foundation for a substantial grant and loan to Ukraine, as a legally sound and financially significant way to maintain and increase our support for Ukraine's military needs;

25. Urges the Council and the Member States to review and strengthen the enforcement of existing sanctions and to adopt and strictly implement restrictive measures against all entities and non-EU states facilitating the circumvention of sanctions, providing Russia's military complex with military and dual-use technologies and equipment; urges the Member States to pay special attention to the Russian shadow fleet and the security and environmental risks this poses;

26. Insists on the paramount importance of cooperation with, and the integration of, the Ukrainian defence industry into the EDTIB, which offers clear advantages for both sides, and calls for its speedier integration; highlights the urgency of properly financing EDIP's Ukraine Support Instrument, which is currently not budgeted; further proposes the provision of war insurance for critical EDTIB projects inside Ukraine; proposes the regular inclusion of Ukrainian Defence Ministry officials with observer status at meetings of relevant Council configurations;

27. Urges the Commission and the Member States to make full use of the lessons learnt from Ukraine's advanced modern warfare capabilities, including drones and electronic warfare;

28. Calls on the Commission to propose an EU drones package, focusing on drone and anti-drone systems and auxiliary capabilities, containing plans and funds to stimulate research and development, which should draw on lessons learnt from the Ukrainian experience and be open to the participation of Ukraine's highly innovative companies, as well as an industrial programme dedicated to the joint development, production and procurement of drone and anti-drone systems, and a regulation on the use of drones in civilian and military contexts;

'Ready for the most extreme military contingencies' – a new long-term approach

Preparedness

29. Stresses that preparedness for hybrid and grey zone attacks must become part of the EU's strategic culture, with permanent exercises, joint threat assessments and pre-planned, coordinated responses among Member States, particularly in regions bordering hostile powers;

30. Calls for the EU to develop a comprehensive EU risk assessment to help identify the major cross-sectoral threats and hazards, as well as the

concrete risks facing the EU as a whole, building on current sector-specific risk assessment procedures;

31. Insists on the importance of using the upcoming 'Preparedness Union Strategy' to put the EU on track for comprehensive preparedness;

32. Supports a 'Preparedness by Design' principle being embedded horizontally and consistently across the EU institutions, bodies and agencies; insists on the need to develop a mandatory 'security and preparedness check' for future impact assessments and 'stress-tests' for existing legislation; stresses the need to reduce the obstacles in current national and EU legislation that undermine the efficiency of European defence and security;

33. Recommends, in particular, the Niinistö report recommendations aimed at empowering citizens to make societal resilience work, inspired by the Finnish concept of total defence;

34. Invites the Commission and the Member States to explore the feasibility of an EU preparedness act, setting joint standards and long-term guidelines to align EU and national efforts when possible;

35. Calls for the EU and its Member States to establish and regularly conduct an EU comprehensive preparedness exercise to horizontally test both high-level decision-making and operational coordination in order to build strong links between actors and across sectors;

36. Calls for the EU and its Members States to facilitate the use of CSDP instruments in complementarity with internal security tools in the immediate vicinity of the EU's territory and territorial waters, and to strengthen dual-use and civil-military cooperation at EU level, based on a whole-of-government approach; reiterates its call for the protection of critical underwater infrastructure via the establishment of EU-specific rapid response strategies for underwater infrastructure protection,

operating in alignment with NATO; encourages investment in advanced detection and surveillance systems for underwater infrastructure monitoring;

Readiness: the Strategic Compass and the European Defence Industrial Strategy as the right tools

37. Calls for the EU to urgently adapt its tools to new realities by designing an administrative capacity to move much faster through the procedures when faced with wars or other large-scale crises, and to adopt the appropriate tools;

38. Considers regular threat analyses, such as the one first conducted in the Strategic Compass, as an absolute necessity; recommends, therefore, updating the EU's Strategic Compass and adapting the measures within it accordingly in order to reflect the magnitude of our threat environment, and conducting more frequent threat assessments, as they are a precondition for realistically and successfully planning our capabilities and operations; considers that the Strategic Compass, the CSDP, the white paper and the European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS) should form the basis for a comprehensive vision of European defence;

39. Insists that the Rapid Deployment Capacity must achieve full operational capability in 2025 and should be upgraded to be able to face the most extreme military contingencies; reiterates its call to strengthen the EU's Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), establishing it as the preferred command and control structure for EU military operations and providing it with adequate premises, staff and effective communication and information systems for all CSDP missions and operations, including those of the Rapid Deployment Capacity;

40. Reiterates its call on Türkiye, a NATO member, to withdraw its troops

from Cyprus, an EU Member State, and work constructively to find a viable and peaceful solution based on the relevant UN resolutions;

41. Strongly believes that, in the current geopolitical context, the operationalisation of Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) on mutual assistance is of utmost importance, ensuring solidarity among Member States, especially those whose geographical position leaves them directly exposed to imminent threats and challenges, regardless of whether they are NATO members;

42. Reiterates the importance of EU-NATO cooperation, as NATO remains, for those states that are members of it, an important pillar of their collective defence; stresses that EU-NATO cooperation should continue, in particular, in areas such as information exchange, planning, military mobility and the exchange of best practice, and to reinforce deterrence, collective defence and interoperability; calls, nonetheless, for the development of a fully capable European pillar of NATO able to act autonomously whenever necessary; reiterates its call to strengthen cooperation – through action, not only words – on military mobility, information exchange, coordination of planning, improved cooperation on their respective military operations and enhanced response to hybrid warfare aimed at destabilising the whole EU continent;

43. Invites the Member States to actively participate in a priority-ordering mechanism for defence production to help prioritise orders, contracts and the recruitment of employees in emergency situations; underlines that the Member States should go beyond their current defence applications to encompass other essential resilience-building infrastructure such as energy, transport and telecommunications;

44. Recognises that the starting point must be a realistic assessment of critical defence capability gaps and shortfalls in order to ramp up defence

industry production; underlines the need to ensure the coherence of output between the EU's Capability Development Plan (CDP) and Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and NATO's capability targets in order to identify and address the critical defence capability gaps and shortfalls in the EU and focus efforts on European strategic enablers to provide genuine EU added value in order to address most extreme military contingencies; calls on the Commission to act on the recommendations of the European Court of Auditor's Special Report 04/2025 on military mobility and to give greater importance to the military assessment during the selection process for dual-use projects;

45. Urges the EU and its Member States, with regard to armed forces, to move from the 'flow' approach that prevailed during peaceful times to a 'stock' approach, with a stockpile of defence equipment ready for a sustained increase in demand; notes, in this regard, the advantages offered by mechanisms such as advance purchase agreements, the establishment of 'ever-warm' facilities and the creation of defence readiness pools; believes that the Commission should take any actions necessary to encourage the Member States to increase exchanges and build trust among them regarding long-term, transparent planning, more proactive measures aimed at securing raw materials, and policies to close gaps in production processes and on the labour market;

46. Calls for the EU to adopt a global and coherent approach to external aid in all of its dimensions, with much stronger alignment between common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and CSDP objectives and instruments; considers that the strategic environments in which many EU CSDP missions are present are radically deteriorating, which demonstrates the need for the white paper to ensure flexibility in a 360 degree approach to European security that strives towards building a credible and capable deterrence capacity for the Member States, and

ensures that Member State civilian and military personnel can deter and respond rapidly to the growing threat environment;

47. Considers that the CSDP must strongly participate in the fight against hybrid warfare against partner countries, particularly candidate countries; is deeply worried by the sharp increase in hybrid attacks, including sabotage, cyberattacks, information manipulation and election interference, with the objective of weakening the EU and its candidate countries; calls on the EU Member States to consider appropriate deterrence and countermeasures, including through the use of Article 42(7) TEU; calls, furthermore, on the Member States to pool resources and expertise in the field of cybersecurity; strongly advocates the development of a unified European approach to cyber forces; further insists on the swift creation of joint European cyber capabilities; recalls the increasing threats of cyber warfare and underlines the need for the EU to establish an EU cyber defence coordination centre to monitor, detect and respond to cyber threats in real time;

48. Insists on the need to improve the CSDP's ability to identify, prevent and counter information manipulation aimed at hindering the EU's external action; reiterates its calls to establish an effective horizontal strategic communications strategy adapted to all EU channels;

49. Calls for the creation of an 'EU crisis response air fleet' under the CSDP, comprising military transport aircraft held at EU level and made available to Member States for EU deployments, the transport of equipment or troops (military mobility), or in the event of emergency evacuations – as shown by the capability gap during the withdrawal from Afghanistan – as well as for civil security missions, based on a model similar to the European Air Transport Command;

Coherence and sovereignty

Coherence

50. Expects the European External Action Service (EEAS) to carry out comprehensive and uncompromising reviews of CSDP missions and operations, taking into account, in particular, the feasibility of their respective mandates in relation to the resources allocated, the staff recruitment method for missions and operations, especially on the link between the skills required and the different profiles, as well as the rationalisation of resources and the management of missions and operations, transparency in calls for tender, activities and results obtained, lessons learnt from best practice and difficulties encountered; asks the Council, on the basis of these reviews, to take decisions aimed at adapting or abandoning ineffective missions and strengthening the most useful missions; believes that the governance of evaluation and the control of CSDP missions and operations must be improved;

51. Believes that the EU should develop wartime economic cooperation contingency plans with close partners to ensure mutual support in the case of large-scale security crises involving them directly, and should deepen wartime economic dialogues with European and global partners to provide early warning of hard, hybrid and cyber threats, and foster mutual support planning, the protection of critical infrastructure and maritime safety;

52. Calls for the EU to further accelerate the implementation of military mobility; believes that the EU has to move from 'mobility' to 'military logistics'; stresses the need for significant investment in military mobility infrastructure to enhance cargo airlift capabilities, camps, fuel infrastructure through depots, ports, air, sea and rail transport platforms, railway lines, waterways, roads, bridges and logistic hubs; stresses that this must be done in cooperation with NATO by drafting a strategic plan for developing mobility; calls for the rapid implementation of the technical

arrangement signed under the aegis of the European Defence Agency Cross-Border Movement Permission, the harmonisation of customs formalities and the preparation of a centralised and justified lifting of road and rail traffic standards in the event of a crisis situation;

53. Believes that, in order to create a favourable ecosystem for the European defence industry, the EU must decide on a united and clear long-term vision for the European defence industry in order to provide visibility to the industry and ensure that priority needs are addressed;

54. Stresses that EDIP must actively facilitate the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and new market entrants through simplified access to funding; emphasises that EDIP should be designed as a stepping stone towards greater European sovereignty in defence production; suggests that successful Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and European Defence Fund (EDF) projects be prioritised along the line of known capability gaps and that sufficient funding be ensured for projects that have proven to deliver; reiterates its call on the Member States to provide an implementation report on PESCO projects to Parliament at least twice a year; calls for a more geographically balanced development of the EDTIB, ensuring that critical capabilities, such as ammunition production, air defence systems and drone technologies, are also developed in frontline states, which have a direct understanding of operational needs;

55. Is deeply convinced that the EU-level instruments should prioritise and massively increase support for SMEs and start-ups in the dual-use and defence sector; stresses the need to support SMEs and start-ups in bringing successfully tested prototypes to the market, including the scaling up of production; underlines the need to bridge the current funding gap as regards these important steps that would strengthen the EDTIB, including in close cooperation with the Ukrainian technological

and defence industrial base;

56. Urges the EU to increase coherence between existing and future EU instruments, in particular between PESCO, on demand consolidation, and the EDF, on programmatic roadmaps; between the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), on joint procurement, and the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP), on industrial ramp-up; between EDIP, on the identification of dependencies, and the EDF, on the resolution of identified dependencies; or within EDIP itself, on coherence within the instrument of the implementation of actions related to the consolidation of demand and supply;

57. Calls for a significant increase in common procurement by the Member States of required European defence equipment and capabilities; calls on the Member States to aggregate demand by procuring defence equipment jointly, with the possibility of granting the Commission a mandate to procure on their behalf, ideally ensuring a long-term planning horizon for the EDTIB, thus improving the EDTIB's production capacities and the interoperability of the European armed forces, and making efficient use of taxpayers' money through economies of scale;

58. Welcomes the proposal for European Defence Projects of Common Interest on the development of common capabilities that go beyond the financial means of a single Member State; believes that these projects should be used to support the industrial and technological capacities that underpin the major common priorities of several Member States and in fields such as external border protection and defence, in particular in the land domain, as well as strategic enablers, particularly in space and European air defence, to act on the whole spectrum of threats, military mobility, in particular strategic and tactical air transport, deep strikes,

drone and anti-drone technologies, missiles and munitions, and artificial intelligence, in order to develop sovereign infrastructure and critical enablers; emphasises that pragmatism must prevail due to the sheer number of priorities and the need to mobilise new resources; considers, in that regard, that the EU should focus, where possible, on rapidly available and proven European technologies that gradually reduce our dependencies and improve our security; highlights the need to support the development of pan-European value chains in EU defence cooperation by incorporating companies throughout the Union and to boost competitiveness in the sector by various means, such as mergers and champions; considers, furthermore, that instead of focusing on fair return, our defence policies should encourage the growth of EU centres of excellence;

59. Calls for the further development of an EU defence industrial policy to improve existing and develop defence-specific instruments where necessary, and to optimise the use of non-defence-specific instruments for the purposes of the EDTIB;

60. Recalls the need to ensure coherence in EU public policies, which must not generate obligations contradictory to the overall defence objectives, especially during a security crisis, where the concept of 'strategic exception' should be introduced; calls for the creation of a genuine defence environment in favour of defence that could support industrial ramp-up efforts by taking better advantage of the multi-sectoral Commission instruments by screening, reviewing and, where needed, revising existing ones to ensure that they do not undermine EU defence policy objectives;

61. Recommends the establishment of a security of supply regime, including joint strategic stocks of raw materials and critical parts, to ensure the availability of raw materials and components needed for the

production of defence products, and to allow production cycles to be ramped up faster and shortened; calls for the Commission and the Member States to be jointly tasked with the mapping and monitoring of the EDTIB, with the aims of protecting its strengths, reducing its vulnerabilities, avoiding crises and providing it with an effective and efficient industrial policy;

62. Proposes that relevant defence-related entities/activities be allowed access to InvestEU and other EU funds, taking advantage of EU defence as a job creator; insists that defence-related entities/activities be prioritised as appropriate, with the support of the Chips Act(5) and the Critical Raw Materials Act(6); believes that the simplification efforts announced by the Commission must fully encompass the defence sector; calls on the Commission to leverage the full dual-use potential of space technologies, considering space as both a new operating domain and a critical enabler of multi-domain operations; underlines that the EU currently has a substantial gap in space capabilities compared to its main competitors and stresses that, in order to address this gap in space technologies, already existing flagship projects (i.e. Copernicus and Galileo) should be enhanced for defence applications; suggests, furthermore, that the EU should urgently pursue the development of its IRIS2 constellation, together with the development of further EU common projects, for example, for space domain awareness and space-based missile early-warning applications;

63. Insists on the need to ensure geographical coherence by taking stock of the will of the EU and the UK, first and foremost to build security guarantees for Ukraine and become closer security partners, and to sign a joint declaration with concrete engagements and structured dialogue in order to strengthen EU-UK cooperation on the full range of foreign and security challenges facing the continent, the budgetary and regulatory

conditions of which remain to be negotiated, and keeping in mind the importance of the decision-making autonomy of the EU; underlines, in this regard, the importance of closer cooperation on information and intelligence sharing, military mobility, security and defence initiatives, crisis management, cyber defence, hybrid threats, foreign information manipulation and interference and in jointly addressing shared threats;

64. Calls for more coherence in support of companies by reducing unnecessary administrative burdens and cutting red tape, and ensuring much easier access for small- and mid-cap companies within the defence sector; underlines the need to review, simplify and harmonise the current framework for export licences and intra-EU transfer licences, as well as for cross-certification of equipment, as one of the priorities to foster better cooperation within the market and among Member States;

65. Encourages a common European certification scheme for weapons systems and a move beyond the current system of national certification in order to speed up the introduction of weapons systems into the armed forces of Member States;

66. Calls for greater coherence in governance as CSDP must become the key instrument of a powerful Europe; considers that this requires a real link in governance between the Member States, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and the Commissioners; urges the Member States to overcome the complexity of decision-making processes in the governance of European defence; calls for the creation of a council of defence ministers and for the move from unanimity to qualified majority voting for decisions in the European Council, the Council of Ministers and EU agencies such as the EDA, excluding military operations with an executive mandate; calls, in the meantime, for the use of Article 44 TEU in the creation of a horizontal task force on defence in the Commission;

calls for increased democratic accountability through enhanced oversight by Parliament;

67. Proposes the strengthening of Parliament's oversight and scrutiny role, in line with the expansion of the EU's role in defence; calls for the appointment of a Parliament representative to the new Defence Industrial Readiness Board proposed in EDIP, as there is currently none provided for;

Sovereignty

68. Stresses that the creation of a single European defence market is a priority, as the fragmentation and lack of competitiveness of the European industry have so far hampered the capacity of the EU to assume more responsibility as a security provider; recalls that the concept of a 'defence market' implies a full recognition of its specificity and an appropriate and coherent application of EU public policies; recalls that European preference should be the aim of achieving this single 'market' by strictly linking territoriality and the added value generated in this territory;

69. Considers that European preference must be the guiding principle and long-term ambition of EU policies related to the European defence market, in order to develop and protect European technological excellence; stresses, however, that such preference must not be pursued at the expense of the defence readiness of the Union, given the extent of international supply and value chains in the defence sector;

70. Rejects a scenario in which EU funds contribute to perpetuating or deepening dependences on non-European actors, both for production of capabilities or their deployment;

71. Urges the Member States to stop invoking Article 346 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union as a means of avoiding the

application of the Procurement Directive⁽⁷⁾ (2009/81/EC), thus undermining the common market for defence; calls on the Commission to review the Directive on the transfer of defence-related products⁽⁸⁾ and the Directive on defence procurement as well as the inter-community transfer directive (2009/43/EC) with a view to strengthening the common market for defence and introducing flexibility with regard to crisis situations like the one we are currently facing;

72. Calls on the Commission to design a better-resourced, more strategic and more efficient successor to the European Defence Fund that supports common research and innovation in defence all along the supply chain and to lay the conditions to address technological challenges: advanced persistent threats, artificial intelligence and machine learning, quantum computing, the internet of military things, security, supply chain attacks, zero-day exploits and cloud security; calls for the establishment of an EU agency, inspired by the US's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, as part of the European Defence Agency, which should be solely responsible for supporting research in emerging and disruptive technologies, equipped with an adequate amount of venture capital;

Finance and investments

73. Is concerned that, without a substantial increase in defence investment, the EU's security and defence objectives will not be reached, both in terms of military support for Ukraine and the improvement of our common security; highlights the fact that the cost of non-preparedness for the most extreme military contingencies would be much higher than the cost of decisive EU preparedness; calls for the EU and its Member States to work and agree on concrete ways and means to achieve a short- to long-term substantial increase in public and private investment in defence and security;

74. Considers that, in the EU's next multiannual financial framework (MFF), defence spending lines will have to reflect the new 'ready for the most extreme military contingencies' priority;

75. Insists that urgent needs cannot wait for the next MFF; insists that innovative solutions for finding additional funding must be explored without delay, such as investing in the defence sector, making it easier and faster to repurpose funds from one project to another, and exploring the possibility of adjusting EU funding criteria to give new prominence to security criteria in allocating spending;

76. Welcomes the five-point 'ReArm Europe' plan proposed by the Commission President on 4 March 2025;

77. Strongly supports the idea that EU Member States must increase their defence and security financing to new levels; notes that some Member States have already increased their defence spending to 5 % of GDP;

78. Welcomes the proposals made in the recent Niinistö report as regards the financing of European defence; supports the establishment of a defending Europe facility and a securing Europe facility; equally welcomes and supports the proposal to establish an investment guarantee programme based on the model of InvestEU with open architecture to trigger private sector investment and to issue a 'European preparedness bond standard';

79. Is of the opinion that national recovery and resilience plans should be amended to allow for new defence funding; calls for these investments to also address vulnerabilities in both military capabilities and the social fabric, empowering us to fight all threats to our values, social model, security and defence;

80. Urges the Member States to support the establishment of a defence,

security and resilience bank to serve as a multilateral lending institution designed to provide low-interest, long-term loans that can support key national security priorities such as rearmament, defence modernisation, rebuilding efforts in Ukraine and the buying back of critical infrastructure currently owned by hostile non-EU countries;

81. Calls for a system of European defence bonds to be explored for financing large-scale military investments up front; calls, similarly, for the use of unused 'coronabonds' for defence instruments to be explored, to complement the Commission's 'ReArm Europe' plan, as the EU is now experiencing a pressing need to boost security and defence to protect its citizens, restore deterrence and support its allies, first and foremost Ukraine;

82. Reiterates, in line with the Commission's 'ReArm Europe' plan, its call for the European Investment Bank (EIB) and other international financial institutions and private banks in Europe to invest more actively in the European defence industry; calls, in particular, for an urgent revision of the EIB's lending policy and immediate flexibility to remove current restrictions on financing defence, and for the possibility of issuing earmarked debt for funding security and defence projects to be investigated;

83. Calls on European Council President António Costa to immediately convene the European Council, based on the conclusions of the white paper, so that EU leaders can agree on immediate and far-reaching decisions to implement the European Defence Union as laid out in Article 42(2) TEU and elaborate on the measures identified in the white paper;

84. Welcomes the outcomes of the special European Council of 6 March 2025 and asks the Member States to act decisively during the upcoming March Council meeting;

85. Underlines the need to enhance our partnerships with like-minded countries, particularly those in Europe, such as the UK and Norway; calls for a broad EU-UK security pact, also covering key subjects such as energy, migration and critical minerals; points to the added value of fostering our relationships with global partners such as the US, Japan and Australia;

86. Calls for enhanced cooperation with Western Balkan countries in the area of defence industries; emphasises that Western Balkan countries have significant expertise in defence industries and that the EU should consider procuring military equipment from Western Balkan countries; emphasises that this approach would help make Western Balkan countries stronger allies of the EU;

87. Believes that every effort must be made to maintain and, if possible, foster transatlantic cooperation in every field of the military and defence sector, while recalling the need to foster European defence and develop greater sovereignty;

88. Notes that the above is without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States;

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89. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Council, the Council, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the President of the Commission and competent Commissioners, the EU security and defence agencies and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

(1)	Joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 18 May 2022 on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward (JOIN(2022)0024).
(2)	Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security, which was approved by the Council on 21 March 2022 and endorsed by the European Council on 24 March 2022.
(3)	Report by Mario Draghi of 9 September 2024 on the future of European competitiveness and in particular Chapter Four thereof on increasing security and reducing dependencies.
(4)	Report by Sauli Niinistö of 30 October 2024 entitled ‘Safer Together: Strengthening Europe’s Civilian and Military Preparedness and Readiness’.
(5)	Regulation (EU) 2023/1781 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2023 establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe’s semiconductor ecosystem and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/694 (Chips Act) (OJ L 229, 18.9.2023, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1781/oj).
(6)	Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials and amending Regulations (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1724 and (EU) 2019/1020 (OJ L, 2024/1252, 3.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1252/oj).

(7)	Directive 2009/81/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of procedures for the award of certain works contracts, supply contracts and service contracts by contracting authorities or entities in the fields of defence and security, and amending Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC (OJ L 216, 20.8.2009, p. 76, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/81/oj).
(8)	Directive 2009/43/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 May 2009 simplifying terms and conditions of transfers of defence-related products within the Community (OJ L 146, 10.6.2009, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/43/oj).