



European Council

Brussels, 26 June 2025

III. EUROPEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY

11. Recalling its conclusions of 6 March 2025, the European Council reiterates that Europe must become more sovereign, more responsible for its own defence and better equipped to act and deal autonomously and in a coordinated way with immediate and future challenges and threats, with a 360° approach. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its repercussions for European and global security in a changing environment constitute an existential challenge for the European Union. To deliver on its objective of decisively ramping up Europe's defence readiness within the next five years, the European Council reviewed progress in the implementation of its previous conclusions.
12. The European Council recalls that a stronger and more capable European Union in the field of security and defence will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains, for those States that are members of it, the foundation of their collective defence.
13. The European Council stresses the need to continue to substantially increase expenditure on Europe's defence and security, and invest better together, noting also the commitment made at the June 2025 NATO Summit by the Member States that are also members of NATO. The European Council invites Member States to coordinate among themselves the implementation of relevant commitments. Recalling its conclusions of 20 March 2025 on continued work on the relevant financing options, the European Council reviewed the work done.

14. In this context, the European Council welcomes the adoption of the Regulation establishing the Security Action For Europe (SAFE) and the imminent activation of national escape clauses under the Stability and Growth Pact. The European Council asks the co-legislators to rapidly examine, with a view to a swift agreement, the proposal on incentivising defence-related investments in the EU budget and to advance work on the proposal to address security and defence challenges in the context of the mid-term review of cohesion policy, while recalling the voluntary basis of any such use of funds. It recalls the importance of mobilising private financing for the defence industry, welcomes the efforts by the European Investment Bank in this regard, and invites it to pursue efforts to adapt its practices for lending to the defence industry, notably by continuing to re-evaluate the list of excluded activities and by increasing the volume of available funding in the field of security and defence, while safeguarding its operations and financing capacity.
15. Considering the urgency of strengthening the European defence technological and industrial base across the Union so that it is in a position to better produce and supply equipment in the quantities and at the accelerated pace needed, the European Council reiterates the importance of demand aggregation, harmonisation of requirements, standardisation and joint procurement, as well as the proper functioning and further integration of the European defence market across the Union.
16. Work on capabilities in the priority areas identified at EU level must be accelerated, in full coherence with NATO. The European Council encourages the rapid development and delivery of collaborative projects in that regard, including by making full use of SAFE. In particular, the European Council welcomes the work to identify concrete opportunities and to aggregate demand in the framework of the European Defence Agency. It underlines the need for Member States to swiftly take work forward, including towards the execution of most advanced short-term projects and the launch of longer-term initiatives, with the support of the European Defence Agency, the High Representative and the Commission. In this context, specific attention should be devoted to strategic enablers and innovation in the field of defence, in order to harness the full potential of new technologies.

17. The European Council encourages further work to enable the European defence industry, including SMEs and mid-caps, to scale up production. In particular, following the political agreement reached in the Council on the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) proposal, the European Council urges the co-legislators to conclude negotiations swiftly. It also encourages them to advance rapidly on the 'Defence Readiness Omnibus' proposals.
18. The European Council underlines that the defence of all EU land, air and maritime borders contributes to the security of Europe as a whole, in particular as regards the EU's eastern border, considering the threats posed by Russia and Belarus.
19. In addition, considering the threats on the rest of the EU borders, the European Council stresses the importance of their defence.
20. The European Council invites the Commission and the High Representative to present further proposals to strengthen military mobility, thereby allowing defence equipment and personnel to be moved efficiently across the Union.
21. The European Council underlines the importance of working together with like-minded partners, who share our foreign and security policy goals. It welcomes in that regard the EU's recent Security and Defence Partnerships with the UK and Canada.
22. The European Council will review progress at its October 2025 meeting and discuss the next steps in the implementation of its defence readiness objective. It invites the Commission and the High Representative to present a roadmap to that end.
23. The above is without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States, and takes into account the security and defence interests of all Member States, in accordance with the Treaties.