

# SOME THOUGHTS AND CRITICISMS REGARDING THE REARMEUROPE PLAN-READINESS AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE

**Dimitris LIAKOPOULOS**

*Center of European and International Justice  
777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 USA*

E-mail: [profdl@europe.com](mailto:profdl@europe.com)

ORCID ID: [0000-0002-6803-5774](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6803-5774)

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**Abstract:** *The present paper seeks to explore some recent current considerations regarding European rearmament policy. The March 2025 ReArmEurope Plan/Readiness document is a “cutting-edge” innovation, a response to the ongoing war in Ukraine, aimed at laying the foundations for the process of European integration and development begun years ago. The slow pace of progress in the defense sector, the work undertaken by the Atlantic Alliance and the Trump presidency have brought European defense developments to the forefront at the European and international level, within a framework expected to run until 2030. The work of financial resources, state, national and private funding, creating a technological and industrial base, has placed defense policy at a critical juncture for European and national defense, raising considerable criticism for this sector. The method we used is based on documents drafted by the Union institutions themselves and on the limited scholarship on the subject. We don’t have and we can’t use as a method a relevant jurisprudence in merit of the argument. We attempt to provide a brief, precise and critical analysis of the current and future stages of European defense policy during the rather challenging times Europe is experiencing in this area.*

**Keywords:** *European Union law; ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness; European defense policy; SAFE; PESCO; European integration; ASAP; EDIRPA; CARD; EPF; NextGenerationEU.*

## Introduction

We have reached yet another important milestone with the plan presented on 4 March 2025 by the President of the European Commission (EC), Ursula Von Der Leyen, entitled: ReArm Europe. First and foremost, it is a list of proposals based on and used by the financial sector and then available to the EU member states in order to rapidly increase their European defense spending.<sup>1</sup> The initial criticisms are both positive and negative. The project was initially presented by the European Council on 6 March 2025, when European leaders exchanged views that led to a substantial green light for their plan.<sup>2</sup> A few days later, on 11 March 2025, the

<sup>1</sup> All the online documents of my paper was updated and accessed online until 30 November 2025. See, Press Statement by President Von der Leyen on the Defence Package, 4 March 2025,

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/sv/statement\\_25\\_673](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/sv/statement_25_673). A. Duff, “NATO and the European Union: Bridging the gap”, in European Policy Centre, Brussels, 13 May 2024. For a statistical sources of member states of EU in relation to defence amounts see: Government expenditure on defence:

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Government\\_expenditure\\_on\\_defence#Highlights](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Government_expenditure_on_defence#Highlights).

<sup>2</sup> See the Conclusions of the extraordinary meeting of the European Council, 6 March 2025:

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/aqbp5qxm/20250306-european-council-conclusions-en.pdf>. In merit of some Member states decisions and various positions see: Reuters, “Belgium aims to increase defence spending to 2% of GDP this year”, in Reuters, 4 March 2025: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/belgium-aims-hike-defence-spending-2-gdp-this-year-de-tijd-reports-2025-03-04/>. M. Bryant, “Denmark to spend billions on defence, citing fears over Russian rearmament”, in The Guardian, 19 February 2025:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/19/denmark-to-spend-billions-on-defence-citing-fears-over-russian-rearmament>. ERR, “Minister: Estonia's defense spending will be over 4% of GDP in 2026”, in ERR, 19.02.2025: <https://news.err.ee/1609610003/minister-estonia-s-defense-spending-will-be-over-4-of-gdp-in-2026>.

President presented ReArm Europe to the European Parliament, seeking a positive response from MEPs and from those who had different opinions on the future of European defense.<sup>3</sup> On 19 March 2025, the EC presented the first proposals for a plan entitled ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2023. These lay the foundation for abandoning the relative use of the term rearmament as a defense proposal based on the communication and proposal of the regulation. The President of the EC and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kallas highlighted the White Paper for European Defence-Readiness 2023. This is a programming document that provided a political-strategic reference framework according to the ReArm Europe plan, including a roadmap that reconstructed for European defense the strengthening of member states' preparedness in the face of future scenarios, as we have experienced in practice with the aggression of the Russian Federation v. Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> The initiatives were discussed by the European Council on 20 and 21 March by the heads of state and government, who did not approve the EC initiatives that were implemented with greater urgency.<sup>5</sup>

The ReArm Europe plan, as well as subsequent documents, are linked to a series of events and trends that currently characterize the international geopolitical context. The response to US President Donald Trump's decision was to permanently suspend military aid to Ukraine<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, the EC project assumes responsibility for Europe in the face of much discussion and commentary from the US president, as well as the UN's relative disengagement from defense policy in the old continent and requests for European allies to increase their contribution to NATO's GDP.<sup>7</sup> The trend was toward a relative return to concepts and scenarios that considered

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M. Karnitsching, N. Alipour, "With an eye on Trump and Putin, Germany's likely new coalition prepares to rebuild the military and jumpstart the economy", in Euractiv, 06.06.2025:

<https://www.euractiv.com/news/germanys-centrist-parties-plan-to-unlock-billions-for-defence-and-infrastructure/>. J. Fox, (22 February 2025). "Defence budget should reach highest level of €3bn, says Tànaiste", in RTE, 22.02.2025: <https://www.rte.ie/news/2025/0222/1498201-defence-forces/>. J. Budginaite-Froehly, "Lithuania connects to Europe's rearmament industry", in CEPA, 20.02.2025: <https://cepa.org/article/lithuania-connects-to-europes-rearmament-industry/>. G. Sorgi, C. Martuscelli, G. Faggionato, "EU wide borrowing for defence a "no brainer", says Spain's finance minister", in Politico, 17-02-2025:

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-wide-borrowing-for-defense-a-no-brainer-says-spains-finance-minister/>. J. Liboreiro, "Poland pitches rearmament bank to boost Europe's defence spending", in Euronews, 6 February 2025: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/02/06/poland-pitches-rearmament-bank-to-boost-europes-defence-spending>. Romania Journal, "EU plans black sea security hub, invests in Romania, Bulgaria", in Romania Journal. 29 August 2025: <https://www.romaniajournal.ro/politics/eu-plans-black-sea-security-hub-invests-in-romania-bulgaria/>

3 MEPs debate: Future of EU Defence and Support for Ukraine, 11 March 2025:

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20250310IPR27219/meps-debate-future-of-eu-defence-and-support-for-ukraine>

4 Commission Unveils the White Paper for European Defence and the ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_25\\_793](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_793). White Paper for European Defence and the ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030: Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Kaja Kallas at the Press Conference, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/white-paper-european-defence-and-rearm-europe-plan-readiness-2030-remarks-high-representativevice\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/white-paper-european-defence-and-rearm-europe-plan-readiness-2030-remarks-high-representativevice_en). E. Pollman, "The crime of aggression and the case of Ukraine", in American Yearbook of International Law-AYIL, 1, 694-729.

5 European Council Conclusions, 20 March 2025: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/03/20/european-council-conclusions-20-march-2025/>

6 G., Irto, I. Kharitonov, T. Nishikawa, C. Trebesch, "Ukraine Aid: How Europe Can Replace US Support", in Kiel Policy Brief 186, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, 2025: <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/publications/ukraine-aid-how-europe-can-replace-us-support-33907/>

7 D. Liakopoulos, "Interpretations, thoughts and critics of international responsibility of the European Union in the implementation of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP)", in International and European Union

the recourse to rearmament and the deterrent function obsolete. The EC framed the related process from the time of the Union to push European states to assume responsibility for European defense by addressing the fragmentation of national armies<sup>8</sup>. In a direct way, the trend consolidated over the years of reliance on NATO and especially on the continuous American support for defense, in addition to the economic and financial crisis during 2007 and 2013, has led to a depletion of the relevant defense budgets for all member states.<sup>9</sup>

Within this scenario, the Union has sought to encourage a progressive increase in the military capabilities of the member states, especially in their interoperability,<sup>10</sup> by developing and operating a synergy that acts as a leading harbinger of the birth of a common European defense in accordance with the spirit of Art. 42, paragraph 2 TEU.<sup>11</sup> Thus, a common defense was defined through the fusion of national armies and a true European army, equipped with structures based on and removed from the authority of the member states, directly under the relative command and the political and military command structures of the Union.

A “perfect marriage” between political and military commands had always been a difficult reality. The choices regarding defense and the establishment of an institution for maintaining armies were, in effect, a matter of a certain responsibility for the member states. The Union thus played the role of facilitator through direct action for the integration, strengthening and financial consolidation of the related efforts, leaving the states to decide, implement and develop their defense capabilities. Thus, the Union's commitment, especially at the financial level and the efforts of the states, decide and develop the role and commitment of the Union, especially of the EC, to foster the creation of a European defense industry capable of meeting the member states' needs in the field of defense capabilities.<sup>12</sup>

## A bit of past history

The history of the birth and stages of defense policy are not of much interest for the present investigation. Instead, we would like to focus briefly on “the mutual defensive assistance clause”. Since crises continue, it is important, in every case of armed aggression against another member state's territory, to consider other member states that provide support and assistance by all means. As a reference point, we also have Article 42, paragraph 7 TEU, which provides for a form of ordinary cooperation. When exercises are jointly implemented to make Article 42, paragraph 7 TEU operational, Article 5 of the Atlantic Pact is simultaneously activated in the event of an armed attack on a member state of the Union and NATO.

In this regard, Article 42, paragraph 7 of the TEU will be operational for the Atlantic clause. The issue of activation regarding coordination on the battlefield allows the European clause to express itself in a form of systematic cooperation between member states. This

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Legal Matters-working paper series, 2018, 4ss. See also the List of sovereign states in Europe by GDP (PPP): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_sovereign\\_states\\_in\\_Europe\\_by\\_GDP\\_\(PPP\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_in_Europe_by_GDP_(PPP))

8 Press release, April 30, 2025 Brussels, 12 Member States request activation of the national escape clause in a coordinated move to boost defence spending: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_25\\_1121](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1121)

9 S. Blockmans, “The EU's Modular Approach to Defence Integration: An Inclusive, Ambitious and Legally Binding PESCO?”, in *Common Market Law Review*, n. 55 (6), 2018, pp. 1785-1826.

10 R. Vanholme, “Military Interoperability. Assessing the European Defence Initiatives of 2009 and 2016”, in FINABEL, Bruxelles, Working Paper, 1/2021, <https://finabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/6.-EU-Law-and-Military-Interoperability-1-compressed.pdf>.

11 M., Kellerbauer, M., Klamert, J., Tomkin, J., *Commentary on the European Union treaties and the Charter of fundamental rights*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024

12 Communication from the Commission. Defence Action Plan, 30 November 2016, COM(2016) 950 final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52016DC0950>

conclusion confirms positions also taken in Article 42, paragraph 7 of the TEU regarding the operationalization of Article 5 of the Atlantic Pact. Not all member states favor this European provision. Indeed, Poland and the Baltic states, most in favor, connect with the Atlantic clause.<sup>13</sup>

We must also highlight a non-systematic cooperation that seeks to financially benefit from financing programs, appropriations from the Union budget that are allocated to support military capabilities development projects. In this spirit, we mention the European Defence Fund, which, during the period 2021-2027, has sought to promote competitiveness, innovation, an industrial base, defense technology, etc. namely, the European Connection Mechanism<sup>14</sup> and the financing for the development of mobility, including a military one. In this regard, we recall, ASAP<sup>15</sup> and EDIRPA,<sup>16</sup> two programs that began operating in 2023 to also support, respectively, the production of munitions for joint defense procurement.

The temporary instruments are replaced by the European Defence Industry Programme upon their approval. This highlights the legal bases that also allow for an influence on the Union's competences within the Lisbon Treaty, which may also affect defence developments. The related regulations are not adopted through the CSDP but within the framework of the Union's competences in the fields of industry, research, technological development, space policy and trans-European networks. And if this were not the case, the relevant appropriations related to the Union budget could be burdened. This further demonstrates, for the Union budget and for defence development, that the general rule governs military spending, as also provided for in Article 41 of the TEU, to be borne by the Member States of the Union.

### **The path of the rearm europe plan/readiness 2023**

The European defense policy sector found itself on the European and global stage after the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, beginning to accelerate political decisions with the aim of helping Ukraine defend itself by providing weapons and all types of support, as well as military equipment. We begin with the conclusions of the European Council of 19 and 20 December 2013, where the heads of state and government included the concept of strategic autonomy within the European context. This concept responds to the declarations directed at the United States for a progressive reduction of its military presence in Europe, which reflected the Obama administration's dissatisfaction and the allies' resources for defending their continent.<sup>17</sup> The path of strategic autonomy placed the November 2016 Council to act autonomously with its partners when possible and in crisis situation.<sup>18</sup> This links to the need to develop an industrial and technological base for the defense sector, thus supporting this policy in a competitive and integrated manner.

<sup>13</sup> S. Clapp, *"Implementation of the Strategic Compass. Opportunities, challenges and timelines"*, European Parliament Research Service, December 2022, p. 18ss.

<sup>14</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility and repealing Regulations (EU) No. 1316/2013 and (EU) No. 283/2014, PE/52/2021/INIT, OJ L 249, 14.7.2021, pp. 38–81: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1153/oj/eng>

<sup>15</sup> Regulation (EU) 2023/1525 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 July 2023 on support for the production of ammunition (ASAP), PE/46/2023/REV/1, OJ L 185, 24.7.2023, pp. 7-25: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/1525/oj/eng>

<sup>16</sup> Regulation (EU) 2023/2418 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on the establishment of an instrument for strengthening the European Defence Industry through joint procurement (EDIRPA), in OJ EU L 2023/2418: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2418/oj/eng>

<sup>17</sup> K. Larres, *"The United States and the 'Demilitarization' of Europe: Myth or Reality?"*, in *Politique étrangère*, n. 1, 2014, pp. 117-130

<sup>18</sup> Council Conclusions on the implementation of the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defence, 14 November 2014, doc. No. 14149/19, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14149-2016-INIT/it/pdf>



A strategy for Europe was also reworked in 2016 by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who highlighted the need for member states to coordinate their capabilities at all levels.<sup>19</sup> The Union's support was based on several complementary instruments designed to foster coordination. In 2017, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) was created within the European Defence Agency (EDA)<sup>20</sup>. Its ultimate goal was to support member states' defence ministers through reports, recommendations and collaborative opportunities based on development priorities and on their own military capabilities, among other things. It is clear that the lack of operational tasks resulted in limitations within the procedural framework of CARD. Participation in the agency is not mandatory but voluntary. Only in 2023, after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, did Denmark lift the opt-out for related security and defense issues that it had had since 1993,<sup>21</sup> when it joined its own agency and also when it met with all the member states of the Union. And all of this on a voluntary basis for the agency's defense projects.<sup>22</sup>

With a CFSP decision,<sup>23</sup> which was highlighted through the operationalization of the Permanent Structure Cooperation (PESCO) introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, groups of member states were allowed to leverage their resources and gradually deepen defense cooperation through well-planned and studied projects. More than 60 projects were already underway, most of which aimed to finalize and develop national military capabilities toward continued defense integration. In 2018, the creation of a financial system based on the European Defense Fund (EDF) began<sup>24</sup>. Its ultimate goal was to invest in research into products, innovative technologies in the defense sector and to the acquisition of key strategic capabilities within the scope of PESCO projects, including national funding for states to cooperate and invest more. The fund was operational from 2021 with a budget of €7.3 billion for a period of seven years. Instead, the responsibility for management was entrusted to the EC itself for the adoption of a work programme, which established the management, which was entrusted to the EC itself every year when a programme was adopted inviting proposals for the necessary funds relating to the budget of the Union.<sup>25</sup>

Above all, after the unilateral military invasion of Ukraine and the related Versailles Declaration of 24 February 2022, on 11 March<sup>26</sup> the heads of state and government of the Union condemned Russia's action and agreed on their need for a significant increase in defense

19 EEAS, Shared Vision, Common Action: A stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's and Foreign and Security Policy, June 2016: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs\\_review\\_web\\_0.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf)

20 See, Defence Data for all the members of the EU: <https://eda.europa.eu/publications-and-data/defence-data>

21 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Danes vote yes to abolish EU defence opt-out-here are the next steps, 2 June 2022: <https://via.ritzau.dk/pressemeddelelse/13652552/danes-vote-yes-to-abolish-eu-defence-opt-out-here-are-the-next-steps?publisherId=13560888>

22 European Council, European Defence Agency, Denmark joins the European Defence Agency, 23 March 2023: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/05/23/eu-defence-cooperation-council-welcomes-denmark-into-pesco-and-launches-the-5th-wave-of-new-pesco-projects/>

23 Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017 establishing permanent structured cooperation (CFSP) and establishing the list of participating Member States, *OJ L 331*, 14.12.2017, pp. 57-77: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32017D2315&qid=1741429023145>

24 See for example Article 10(2) of the EDF Regulation that affirmed: "(...) subject to a restriction by a non-associated third country or a non-associated third-country entity directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediary legal entities (...)".

25 Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 (Text with EEA relevance), PE/11/2021/INIT, *OJ L 170*, 12.5.2021, pp. 149-177: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0697&qid=1741513997953>

26 Informal meeting of Heads of State and Government, Versailles Declaration, 10 and 11 March 2022: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2022/03/10-11/>

spending, thus influencing and developing an action plan to define the Union's strategic vision. This project was called the Strategic Compass.<sup>27</sup> This strategy, envisaged by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Borrell, which was also formally adopted by the Council on 21 March 2022, acknowledged the related return to international relations and to the politics of power and armed aggression, thus introducing a timeframe to strengthen European security and defense policy by 2030. The main objective was to accelerate the process of strengthening its defense policy capacity, increase and improve investments and innovative technologies, while reducing and fragmenting the coordination of defense policies for member states. As a consequence, the member states have highlighted the need to increase their defence budgets by 200 billion euros over the next few years.<sup>28</sup>

The objective for the member states was the document, based on existing instruments such as PESCO, which identified new projects such as the European Defence Fund and the forecast that increased long-term financial resources for the Union. The involvement of the European Investment Bank (EIB), especially a few days after it launched the European Security Strategy Initiative (SESI), allocated approximately €6 billion for research and development funding, and for dual-use products targeting military and civilian targets.<sup>29</sup>

In this spirit, the EC introduced complementary temporary and emergency instruments aimed at enabling effective aid for Europe. The first was a direct instrument to financially support partial reimbursements, such as cooperation between Member States and the acquisition of material and defense-related equipment through joint procurement by consortia involving at least three Member States (EDIRPA).<sup>30</sup> The EDIRPA was established in 2023 with a fund of €300 million, intended to last until 31 December 2025. A second instrument was established in 2024. It provided funding to strengthen European industry and defense with the aim of providing timely land-based munitions, artillery, and missiles delivered to Ukraine (ASAP).<sup>31</sup> This instrument included €500 million and remained operational until 25 June 2025.

### **What did the rearm europe plan/readiness 2030 include?**

The ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030 project included preliminary preparation, if we dare say so, for a timeline indicated by the strategic compass of 2022. It quickly represented a process of rebuilding member states' defense capabilities, which assumed political and symbolic weight. The documents developed were based on five measures that called for a further increase in European security and defense spending, with the aim of mobilizing resources in accordance with the EC's guidelines, reaching figures exceeding €800 billion. From this, a figure of €650 billion was calculated to be transferred to national budgets, as well

27 European Union, External. Action: A strategic compass for security and defense. For a European Union that protects its citizens, values, and interests and contributes to international peace and security, 21 March 2022, No. 7371/22: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en)

28 JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward, JOIN/2022/24 fina: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52022JC0024>

29 European Investment Bank, EIB Approves Strategic Europe Security Initiative, Confirm Ukraine Disbursement and Backs 543 million Business and Clean Energy Investment, 10 March 2022: <https://www.eib.org/en/press/all/2022-122-eib-approves-strategic-european-security-initiative-confirms-ukraine-disbursement-and-backs-eur543-million-business-and-clean-energy-investment>

30 Regulation (EU) 2023/2418 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on establishing an instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement (EDIRPA), op. cit.,

31 Regulation (EU) 2023/1525 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 July 2023, op. cit.,

as €150 billion in loans as a guarantee from the Union budget. This resulted in a four-year period and an increase of approximately 1.5% of the member states' total GDP dedicated to defense spending, reaching a percentage of more than 3% of GDP.<sup>32</sup>

The relevant measures and criticisms were based on the fact that the EC invited member states to activate a national safeguard clause, thus introducing a reform area for the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP).<sup>33</sup> This provides greater flexibility and an increase in public spending, which is part of an additional budgetary space aimed at also investing in the defense sector. Thus, the clause stipulated that a member state's request, subject to a recommendation from the EC, gave the Council the power to permit deviations from an approved spending path for the state that was activating the correction path through an excessive deficit procedure and in the presence of exceptional circumstances beyond the Council's control. The repercussions were significant for their finances. The spending path, a multi-year plan for net primary expenditure and the interests of a series of other expenditures, commits states to pursue and ensure sustainable public finance management. Essentially, the activation of the clause and national defense investments would impact a parameter relating to the deficit and GDP as foreseen by the Stability and Growth Pact.

In this spirit, the EC's invitation has raised concerns. During the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council of 6 March, the heads of state and government emphasized and expanded the safeguard clause at the national level, ensuring the sustainability of public spending, especially for states with high levels of debt.<sup>34</sup> At this level, there is much criticism based on the clause in question, which also conceives deviations from a time-limited spending path as an adequate outcome to incentivize long-term investments, especially those in defense, as evidenced by the existence of national legal systems that imposed legal constraints preventing the increase in deficits to finance rearmament.<sup>35</sup> The safeguard clause does not appear to be so easily justified given that it is recognized in exceptional circumstances. States are not obligated to resort to such clauses that target a certain level of debt as the economic consequences of continued indebtedness<sup>36</sup>. From a political perspective, the imbalance in favor of spending and defense leaves no doubt as to the European institutions' intransigence in opposing exemptions stemming from the pact regarding the related spending for the Green Deal.

In the same spirit, we recall the communication of 19 March, according to which the EC defined the relevant framework for the inclusion of defense spending in the Stability and Growth Pact, along with partial details, in response to the concerns and doubts that have arisen

32 European Defence Agency, in document of Defence Data 2023-2024: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/db9a6195-3532-11f0-8a44-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>. D. Liakopoulos, *"The future of European defense through blockchain as a way to integrate, fill gaps and address the crises of wars in a European context"*, in *Public Security and Public Order*, n. 36, 2024, pp. 124-134.

33 Regulation (EU) 2024/1263 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2024 on the effective coordination of economic policies and on multilateral budgetary surveillance and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1466/97, PE/51/2024/REV/1, OJ L, 2024/1263, 30.4.2024: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1263/oj/eng>

34 V. L. Guttenberg, N. Redeker, *"How to Defend Europe without Risking Another Euro Crisis"*, Hertie School, Jack Delors Center, Policy Brief, 21 February 2025

35 P. Dermine, *"Funding Europe's Defence. A First Take On the Commission's ReArm Europe Plan"*, *VerfBlog*, 2025/3/05, <https://verfassungsblog.de/rearm-europe-law/>

36 S. Grund, A. Steinbach, *"European Union debt financing: leeway and barriers from a legal perspective"*, Working Paper 15/2023, in Bruegel: at <https://www.bruegel.org/working-paper/european-union-debt-financing-leeway-and-barriers-legal-perspective>

in this regard.<sup>37</sup> The communication specified the authorization for a member state to divert limited net expenditures specifically to defense spending, i.e., current investments, up to a maximum of 1.5% of GDP for one year.<sup>38</sup> This percentage considered and opened the way for compromises without jeopardizing the sustainability of spending and allowing all states to benefit from this type of flexibility. The communication provided for the relevant diversion, which was monitored by the EC and the Council, ensuring the activation of a coordinated national safeguard clause for all states. Thus, a four-year period of clause availability for national defense spending was established. This period considered the implementation of defense investment projects as adequate. Projects planned and implemented in times of urgency. The EC introduced new investment requirements for the Stability and Growth Pact without compromising its own structure and with a clear aim to implement the clause that precisely assesses the functioning, needs and problems expressed and those that can be resolved with respect to any issues that arise.

The constraints were primarily national requiring therefore relevant reforms, as was the case with Germany, which was trying to eliminate a debt that allowed for unlimited spending on its defense. There was talk of a €500 billion fund and a renewal for infrastructure and economic recovery.<sup>39</sup> Within this framework, a second measure envisaged by the ReArm Europe program was noted, consisting of a financial instrument for the Union entitled Security and Action for Europe (SAFE), which granted member states loans guaranteed for the Union up to a total of up to €150 billion. The regulation proposal was presented on 19 March, at a time when the SAFE, as a temporary and urgent instrument, was intended to support the European defense industry as well as the integration of investments made by member states at the national level, with the aim of increasing and coordinating them.<sup>40</sup> Loans under these conditions and requests from member states to send to the EC had to be made within six months of the regulation's entry into force and from any funds received and to be used exclusively for their own activities. That is, expenditures and measures such as defense products that fall within and are part of certain critical, distinct sectors. Each purchase is made through joint procurement involving only two member states and/or only one EFTA member state and one candidate state, such as Ukraine. Thus, economies of scale were exploited to procure supplies jointly. Each purchase guarantees the Union's interoperability.

From 4 March 2025, due to the urgency of the situation, the EC highlighted the legal basis of an instrument based on Article 122 TFEU.<sup>41</sup> The emergency and exceptional procedures were directly aimed at addressing crisis situations that respected and concerned individual Member States. The relevant procedure provided for the Council, upon a proposal from the EC, in a spirit of solidarity, for Member States to decide on some measure to address the economic

37 Communication from the Commission. Accommodating Increase Defence Expenditure within the Stability and Growth Pact, 19 March 2023, C(2025) 2000 final: [https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a57304ce-1a98-4a2c-aed5-36485884f1a0\\_en?filename=Communication-on-the-national-escape-clause.pdf](https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a57304ce-1a98-4a2c-aed5-36485884f1a0_en?filename=Communication-on-the-national-escape-clause.pdf)

38 D., Liakopoulos, "Funding and Proposals of the European Commission for Resources in the Field of European Defense Policy". Studies in Law and Justice, n. 4 (4), 2025, pp. 57-68.

39 Reuters, "German Upper House of Parliament Oks Debt Reform, Half-Trillion Found", Reuters, 21 March 2025: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-upper-house-parliament-oks-debt-reform-half-trillion-fund-2025-03-21/>

40 Proposal for a Council regulation establishing the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) through the reinforcement of European defence industry Instrument, 19 March 2025, COM(2025) 122 final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025PC0122>

41 M., Kellerbauer, M., Klamert, J., Tomkin, J., *Commentary on the European Union treaties and the Charter of fundamental rights*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024



situation, which could face serious difficulties in the supply of products, especially in the energy sector. For the SAFE, the procedure provided for in Article 122, paragraph 2 TFEU was appropriate, which the Council, upon a proposal from the EC, granted to the Union's financial assistance to a Member State experiencing difficulties, in crisis, or threatened with serious difficulties of any kind due to natural disasters and exceptional circumstances beyond its control. Article 122, paragraph 2 TFEU has used a legal basis on several occasions. The European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM) was established in 2010 to help Member States address the difficulties arising from the financial crisis and the economic recession, especially during the pandemic.<sup>42</sup> The possibility of using the related Union Solidarity Fund was extended in 2002 to provide assistance in major disasters and public health emergencies.<sup>43</sup>

This is a glimmer of support and aid based on solidarity to mitigate the socio-economic consequences related to the risks of unemployment (SURE).<sup>44</sup> In the case of SURE, the separate parts of the instrument were used as stated in its proposal.<sup>45</sup> The EC resorted to a different debate than in the past, under Article 122 TFEU.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps because its sole aim was to circumvent the EP and to exclude a decision-making process that provided for a procedure regulated under paragraph 2, which the President of the Council informed through the relevant adopted acts.

As we understand, the content of the SAFE regulation enjoyed full strategic relevance at the EP, given that the adoption process was for urgent measures. Regarding the SAFE regulation, the EP's approval for loan requests had been received by the EC, but the institution's assembly did not request the annulment of the regulation *ex tunc*, but rather its own approval, given that it was based on the approval of a well-known legislative act that was intended to replace it. The effects of the regulation in the meantime are produced by a regulation according to the motto "SAFE is safe".<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, it is considered to have reached full completion for the imminent start of implementation upon the CJEU's ruling on financial initiatives from SAFE, which have been completed. The legislative act thus replaces the contested regulation, which concerns future financing for defensive products. The appeal thus expressed the European Parliament's (EP) dissatisfaction with the EC's recurring use of Article 122 TFEU, which was not attributable to critical emergencies. The EP had already invoked the CJEU's case law regarding the use of Article 122 TFEU, which presupposed urgent and exceptional situations that entailed serious economic difficulties for Member States that could not be

42 Council Regulation (EU) No 407/2010 of 11 May 2010 establishing a European financial stabilisation mechanism, *OJ L 118*, 12.5.2010, pp. 1-4: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32010R0407>

43 Regulation (EU) 2020/461 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 March 2020 amending Council Regulation (EC) 2012/2002 in order to provide financial assistance to Member States and countries negotiating their accession to the Union affected by a major public health emergency, PE/6/2020/REV/1, *OJ L 99*, 31.3.2020, pp. 9-12 : <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020R0461&qid=1741884378222>

44 Council Regulation (EU) 2020/672 of 19 May 2020 establishing a European instrument for temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE) following the COVID-19 outbreak, ST/7917/2020/INIT, *OJ L 159*, 20.5.2020, pp. 1-7: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020R0672&qid=1741880441055>

45 Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing a European instrument for temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE) following the COVID-19 pandemic, 2 April 2020, COM(2020) 139 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020PC0139&qid=1742493543322>

46 M. Chamon, "The Rise of Article 122 TFEU. On crisis measures and the paradigm change", *VerfBlog*, 2023/2/01, <https://verfassungsblog.de/the-rise-of-article-122-tfeu/>

47 Minutes, Meeting of 23 April 2025, Brussels, JURIPV(2025)04231, par. 17.

addressed with ordinary instruments. According to the European Parliament: “(...) legally defensible, the measures taken under this article must be 'appropriate' (...) targeted, temporary, and economic in nature (...)”.<sup>48</sup>

It is immediately clear that the financial measures envisaged by the SAFE regulation share the relevant positions of the democratic legitimacy of the regulation being challenged and questioning how the adoption of the limited timeframes requested by the European Council, also deemed indispensable by the EP itself, can proceed. The ordinary legislative procedure typically required two years to activate procedures envisaged by the internal regulation of the EP to reduce the timeframes and the emergency procedure based on Rule 170 and the simplified Rule 52 of the Statute of the Court. These procedures require the participation of the EP as a co-legislator, which guaranteed rapid approval of the regulation, which was incomparable to the two and a half months required by the procedure pursuant to Article 122 TFEU. This is a case that also requires careful consideration of other elements. The possible intervention of other institutions, such as the EC and the Council, is being assessed, according to the conclusions of the advocate general, who has not yet been appointed. The CJEU thus has the opportunity to return to the legitimate use of Article 122 TFEU for emergency situations, also raising questions about identifying a legal basis as another response to SAFE and the difficulties of the hypotheses that arise.

As with SAFE, the possible and expected flexibility that requires justification for exceptional circumstances raises doubts. The continued upward trend in spending increases, as expected in response to every emergency and structural need and the implications of a budget that generates national economies, take into account the diverse financial situations of the 15 member states that have authorized the defense investment framework. Thus, several EU members spend above the 2% GDP threshold, while others find themselves with a baseline spending below this threshold, which corresponds to the standard of the NATO framework set for 2014.

In this spirit, the NATO summit of Hague in June 2025 also called on the 23 member states of the Union to join its alliance and commit to an investment exceeding 5% of GDP for defense spending by 2035. The flexibility clauses activated by the council already have a deadline that considers an increase in military spending, which seeks to reprogram the constraint that is too onerous at the Atlantic level due to the financial and political consequences for the national economies involved.

It is so far clear that the SAFE Regulation of 19 March 2025 established a legal basis, incorporating Article 122 TFEU into an explanatory memorandum that highlights the proposal and effectively explains the underlying rationale. The legal basis begins with a deteriorating security context for the Union, which since the beginning of 2025 has led to the Russian threat, including the uncertainties of a geopolitical situation in which the Union was autonomously guaranteeing its defense. The prerequisites for the sudden and exceptional use of Article 122 TFEU, with a massive impact, lead to the supply of products important to the security and defense of the Union and its Member States. This has created serious strain on national public finances.

In a different way, SAFE used the paragraphs of Article 122 TFEU, explaining that the EC had highlighted an instrument that fell within its own procedures. In the case of SAFE, the same need was not clearly explained. This weakened the EC's reasoning, also raising doubts about the correctness of its own choice. These doubts were resolved, and the Court of Justice

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<sup>48</sup> European Parliament, The Activity Report. Developments and trends in the ordinary legislative procedure. 9th legislature (2019-2024), 2024, p. 5.

of the European Union (CJEU) called for a further interpretation of Article 122 TFEU. The SAFE regulation was adopted with amendments through the approval process, which was challenged before the Court by the EP and a Member State.

It is in this spirit that the Parliament v. Council case 20 August 2025 is considered.<sup>49</sup> In that case, the EP requested the annulment of the SAFE regulation, an appeal based on an erroneous choice based on Article 122 TFEU, i.e., applicable and appealable under conditions of urgency, which constitute the prerequisite. The content of the regulation takes into account the Union's industrial policy in the defense sector, based on Article 173 TFEU. This provision constitutes a financial and support legal basis for defense, which also provides for the adoption of support for Member States according to the co-decision procedure and the participation of the EP in the deliberations. The question arises whether the effects of the SAFE regulation are maintained until an act based on a legal basis is replaced, which is adequate due to the reasoning we saw in the previous paragraph: "SAFE is safe". The insufficient reasoning of the regulation and, above all, of its own prerequisites, which are required by Article 122 TFEU, provides a further basis for complaint with the EP's position of being inadequate to be able to justify its emergencies in a precise manner, as well as the reasons contained in the EC's proposal and the reasoning set out in its recitals which are part of the content and not only of the contested regulation.

We do not forget that the SAFE instrument provides for a recourse to supranational debt, which also appears difficult to adopt on a different legal basis within the framework of the TFEU, with the exception of the flexibility clause within Article 352 TFEU.<sup>50</sup> We must question the abstract possibility of a replication path for the SAFE instrument and for the ad hoc mechanism within the CFSP pursuant to Article 42, par. 4 TEU based on the European Peace Facility (EPF).<sup>51</sup>

The financing instrument's objective is to respect the SAFE as a financial basis that constitutes contributions from the Union budget and the expenditure they imply in the defense sector. The legal bases of defense have not yet allowed for circumvention of their own prohibition on establishing financing mechanisms for the defense sector, which enhances the aspects of industrial policy and the integration of the internal market. Article 42, par. 4 TEU has a use and offers scope for further and greater use, including the Union budget as a guarantee for supranational loans and related capital market contracts, as well as the practical possibility of implementing the similar financing mechanism of the SAFE within the scope of defense policy. This provides a way forward, a problematic solution that raises the issue of a lack of democratic control, as envisaged in Article 122 TFEU, since the EP excludes decision-making procedures within the scope of European defense policy.

We must also question another planned measure, namely the one from ReArm Europe that the EC has offered to member states. This involves a series of options that decide on policy and cohesion programs to increase defense spending for infrastructure, research, and continued development. Although this measure has not sparked opposition from various governments, it raises concerns about the idea that it justifies their citizens' choices to increase military spending, which are intended to foster economic growth and sustainable development. The measures and the defense package of 19 March 2025, along with the press releases from the High Representative and the EC, have ultimately reaffirmed the White Paper for European

<sup>49</sup> CJEU, 20 August 2025, European Parliament v. Council, C-560/25, not other informations

<sup>50</sup> M., Kellerbauer, M., Klamert, J., Tomkin, J., *Commentary on the European Union treaties and the Charter of fundamental rights*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2024

<sup>51</sup> M. Frei, "The European Peace Facility: Yet another important stage for the external relations of the European Union", in *Juris Gradibus*, 4, 2025, 2ss.

Defence as a way to use cohesion funds and defense investments available to states that submit and provide flexibility and incentives for states that decide voluntarily. These types of measures, especially from the EC, concern the involvement of the European Investment Bank (EBI) as well as the mobilization of private capital by facilitating access to financing. The EBI was committed to proposing to a board of directors the eligibility of the bank's shares for financing security and defense projects as dual-use products.

Private capital for the EC has relied on an initiative regarding the savings and investment union dating back to 19 March.<sup>52</sup> This proposed initiative facilitated access to the European capital and business market, including small and medium-sized enterprises and private savings for productive investments in sectors considered strategic for the Union. This strategy includes defense, digital technologies, research, studies, and innovative investments.

### **The path to private financial resources as additional funding**

We discussed in previous paragraphs the funding requested in the European defense sector, also identifying other private financing, both European and previous, that does not involve borrowing by member states but rather their own spending priorities defined by Brussels, as well as the acquisition of private capital. A structural approach is assumed that aligns with defense policy. The related expansion of EBI's activities involves a process of material areas that systematically involves a body of financial effort that supports the development of European defense. Thus, as of 21 March 2025, the EBI Board of Directors has highlighted funding granted to support projects related to common European defense. Since June 2025, this funding has tripled, reaching a total of over €3 billion.

The strategy for the Union, which concerns savings and investments as an initiative presented by the EC, provides for Union competence in financial services, highlighting private capital in the banking system to bridge the credit gap for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as for companies committed to the defense sector.

The EC has favored private investment for the new strategic objectives for the Union, even requesting sums exceeding 800 million euros until 2030 and also reflecting a relative increase in needs for its own defense.<sup>53</sup> In this spirit, the institution exercises legislative initiative in sectors that are no longer directly related to and connected with the promotion and competitiveness targets set for 2025, including the creation of a defense industrial technological base. The news of the adoption of the legislative proposal referred to the impact assessment relating to the revision of Regulation 2019/2088, which is linked to sustainability in the financial services sector, also applied to the defense industrial sector.<sup>54</sup> The related process envisaged and identified resources for defense and the value of the Union budget within the framework of the revision of the Union's regional and cohesion policy, with regard to the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, which is linked with new priorities to the related support for the military industry. This position regarding the structural funds is not automatic. The revision process it provides for Member States is also obvious,

<sup>52</sup> Communication from the Commission. Savings and Investment Union: A strategy to promote citizens' wealth and economic competitiveness in the EU, of 19 March 2025, COM(2025) 124 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0124&qid=1742551996389>

<sup>53</sup> EC, Savings and Investment Union Strategy: Improving financial opportunities for EU citizens and businesses, Brussels, 19 March 2025: [https://finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/savings-and-investments-union-strategy-enhance-financial-opportunities-eu-citizens-and-businesses\\_en](https://finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/savings-and-investments-union-strategy-enhance-financial-opportunities-eu-citizens-and-businesses_en)

<sup>54</sup> Regulation (EU) 2019/2088 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on sustainability-related disclosures in the financial services sector, OJ L 317/2019: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/2088/oj/eng>



granting them flexibility to decide and use the structural funds within the framework of their 2021-2027 programming period, thus allocating them to strengthening their defense and with regard to military mobility.

All Member States have had the flexibility to base their decision on an internal debate regarding the priority for financing European resources, considering the possibility of allocating structural funds dedicated to defense to military objectives. This is uneven, as a result of certain cases, thus increasing their own content, as for example for the Baltic States. Already in the related communication on the NextGenerationEU programming period, which expires in 2026, the EC highlighted the relevant options for modifying the PRR for Member States that use unspent funds for recovery and resilience to support their defense industry. The EP, as co-legislator, has sought to revise NextGenerationEU in accordance with the resolution of 18 June 2025, expressed in terms of analogy<sup>55</sup> and as a revision of a relevant financial instrument. In this spirit, the successful allocation of unspent funds to finance defense spending is part of a good approximation for the resources falling within this category.

### Some criticisms for the future

From the previous paragraphs, we understand that the EC and the related initiatives presented as part of its ongoing work have raised questions for the coming months and years. These questions, however, are being addressed in practice, not just in theory. Thus, it should be remembered that European defense requires increased investment, especially to enhance cooperation and integration between the various national defense policies, with the aim of moving toward greater interoperability.

The draft White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030<sup>56</sup> has defined a political, strategic and operational framework for the concrete proposals of ReArm Europe. These proposals focus on the short term, strengthening military support for Ukraine, the medium to long term and the construction of a Union deterrent capacity sufficient to ultimately prevent any war of attack on foreign territory, especially a war of aggression. Within this spirit, states simultaneously remain responsible for their own defense, thus benefiting from the added value of the Union and also leveraging the single market. As an “institutional” and reference point, Article 42, paragraph 2 TEU represents a further step in this direction. We cannot forget the issue of future relations between the Union and NATO. The planned and developed documents we have seen, from the 2016 strategy to the white paper of 19 March 2025, have reinvigorated every European effort in the area of complementary NATO defense, while also remaining a foundation for the collective defense of the European continent. Within this sphere, even the Trump administration did not want to close the avenues of the Atlantic alliance but, on the contrary, ensured a fair distribution of its spending within the NATO family.

According to the author’s opinion, the current Defense 2030 project has attempted to provide an outcome in terms of limiting its own funding for European defense. It thus clearly emerges that financial instruments constitute a reasonable solution to address the current emergency, thus resorting to a practice that identifies the additional resources that fall within the Union’s competences under the Treaty of Lisbon. This is thus a necessary solution according to established law that seeks to overcome the limitations of a general rule governing military spending for the Union under Article 41 TEU. This general rule is not aligned with other needs

55 European Parliament resolution of 18 June 2025 on the report on the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (2024/2085): [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-0128\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-0128_EN.html)

56 Joint White Paper for Europea Defence Readiness 2030 of 19 March 2025, JOINT(2025) 120 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025JC0120>

of European defense. Thus, ongoing international developments seek to highlight the timeframe for the Union to directly provide defense funding that even partially exceeds the use of the Union budget. The project up to 2030 also lays the foundations for thinking about the use of reconsidering Article 41 TEU for the revision of the treaties by trying to change the direction and to foresee the operational expenditure for the defence policy in accordance with the budget of the Union except for specific cases that the Council had to unanimously identify.

The European Council's work over the coming months seeks to highlight the relevant stages for implementing the ReArm Europe Plan 2030 within the timeframes of evaluation and political input. These stages are important and constantly evolving, especially after the prominence of the American reversal, which respects the support of Ukraine, after the Alaska summit of 15 August 2025 to end the war in Ukraine.<sup>57</sup> This event made us understand that the informal meeting of the foreign and defense ministers of the member states held in Copenhagen on 28–29 August 2025 took place outside the institutional framework of the Union, which defined the European Council's proposals of October 2025. The defense ministers agreed on the member states' commitment to taking a stand and caring for all leading states and their own achievement of the objectives set by the European Council of 6 March 2025 for military areas, namely air defense, missile defense, missile systems, munitions, etc. within the expected deadlines.<sup>58</sup> The Council continues its work, as we saw on 23 and 24 October 2025, to try to achieve the defence objectives up to 2030.<sup>59</sup> The European Council discusses the legislative work and procedures for the adoption of the EDIP programme, as well as the review of the cohesion policy alongside the EP and the EC's proposals for the adoption legislation, modifications to support defence developments with regard to the military modality. Again, in the next stages of 18 and 19 December 2025, the first assessment will be drawn up relating to this implementation path for the adoption of primarily political objectives oriented towards European action in the field of defence for the coming years.

Finally, we can say that the relevant cultural model of European defense appears to be alien to the relevant peace project, which enables and paves the way for a European integration completely different from that of the past and with a minority of the current EP's efforts, which corresponds only to a desire for peace and the overwhelming majority of European citizens. The White Paper project, along with the documents of all the institutions that support it, pushes and contrasts the culture of peace with the aspirations of European integration since the birth of the Union. A culture that is in tune with a multipolar, multicultural world that has not been threatened by armed conflict, dialogue, diplomacy, mutual respect, a spirit of openness and reasoning for a search for shared solutions to current and future problems, which must first and foremost place the protection of humanity within the spirit of peace and international security.

57 Statement by President Macron, Prime Minister Meloni, Chancellor Merz, Prime Minister Starmer, President Stubb, Prime Minister Tusk, President Costa, President Von der Leyen, Brussels, 16 August 2025:

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/bg/statement\\_25\\_1966](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/bg/statement_25_1966): “(...) support to Ukraine will continue. We are determined to do more to keep Ukraine strong in order to achieve an end to the fighting and a just and lasting peace. As long as the killing in Ukraine continues, we stand ready to uphold the pressure on Russia (...) strengthen sanctions and wider economic measures to put pressure on Russia's war economy until there is a just and lasting peace (...)”.

58 EEAS, Informal meeting of defence ministers: press remarks by High Representative Kaja Kallas after the meeting, Copenhagen, 29 August 2025: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/informal-meeting-defence-ministers-press-remarks-high-representative-kaja-kallas-after-meeting\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/informal-meeting-defence-ministers-press-remarks-high-representative-kaja-kallas-after-meeting_en)

59 European Council (26 June 2025), Conclusions, EUCO 12/25, Brussels, par. 22: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/06/26/european-council-conclusions-26-june-2025/>

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