Question for written answer E-004631/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: Aircraft carriers as possible European defence projects of common interest

On 16 October 2025, the Council and the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement on the European defence industry programme (EDIP). This programme provides, inter alia, for European defence projects of common interest (EDPCI). In light of the acute threat resulting from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and hybrid attacks against Member States, the fragmentation of the European defence industry, the lack of a single market for defence equipment, and insufficient cooperation among Member States on key capabilities and strategic enablers, EDPCI are crucial to closing capability gaps, rapidly ramping up industrial production, strengthening European cooperation, acquiring strategic enablers, establishing genuine European leadership and command structures, thereby consolidating European defence capabilities.

A particularly worrying gap in capabilities in this context is the limited and fragmented nature of European aircraft carriers compared to the requirements for sustained, large-scale power projection. France is currently the only EU Member State to have an aircraft carrier equipped with catapults (CATOBAR).

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the current capability gaps as regards aircraft carriers?

2. How does the Commission view the possibility of developing a joint European aircraft carrier as a European defence project of common interest?

3. What specific steps does the Commission intend to take to explore this possibility, e.g. through an independent study?

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