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Answer given by Mr Kubilius
on behalf of the European Commission
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The European Union was founded as a peace project – and it remains one. But peace is not self-sustaining. In an era of rising threats, the Union and its Member States must be prepared to defend themselves and to deter any actor that seeks to challenge EU security or weaken EU democracies. The Union and its Member States need to be ready, even for the most extreme military contingencies such as armed aggression. This is the goal of the ReArm Europe Plan and the White Paper on European Defence – Readiness 2030¹.

The Commission proposal for the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument is fully in line with the Treaty. Once adopted, it will provide loans to Member States to help them boost their defence capabilities through common procurement. This will reinforce the competitiveness and readiness of the European defence industry.

While defence remains firmly within national competence, and Member States retain full sovereignty over their armed forces - from doctrine to deployment - the EU plays a complementary role. The evolving security landscape requires enhanced cooperation among Member States, including in the field of defence. The Treaty on European Union, particularly Article 42, provides a legal basis for developing a Common Security and Defence Policy, which respects the specific character of national defence policies. Recent defence related initiatives aim to support and enhance national efforts, particularly by reinforcing the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base, which is a critical pillar of the EU's overall defence readiness.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6d5db69-e0ab-4bec-9dc0-3867b4373019_en?filename=White%20paper%20for%20European%20defence%20%E2%80%93%20Readiness%202030.pdf.