

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001541/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Michał Dworczyk (ECR)
(15 April 2025)

Subject: Inadequate consideration of eastern EU countries' significance and contribution to European security in EU defence industry initiatives

For decades, eastern European countries have been covered by the security umbrella provided by the United States, neglecting their own defence investments and not fulfilling their commitments as allies. Now, with the security situation deteriorating, countries such as Poland — which has been allocating over 2% of its GDP to defence for many years, thereby fulfilling its NATO commitments and responding to threats from Russia — find themselves at the heart of EU defence. However, in the Commission's latest initiatives on the defence industry and EU security ⁽¹⁾, these countries' committed and long-standing positions have been neither appreciated nor reinforced. Also lacking are any preferential mechanisms and a recognition of the scale of their financial effort and strategic commitment. The need for a geographically even distribution of investments and to support the development of eastern EU countries' potential has also been overlooked.

In light of the above:

1. In its initiatives on defence and the defence industry, why has the Commission not provided for any mechanisms to support, give preference to or, at the very least, recognise Member States that have been allocating at least 2% of their GDP towards defence for years and which, in practice, guarantee the security of the whole EU?
2. Will the Commission also consider Member States' level of defence spending and geostrategic location, particularly for countries on the EU's eastern flank, in current and future initiatives?

Submitted: 15.4.2025

Answer given by Mr Kubilius on behalf of the European Commission
(1 July 2025)

Member States that are also North Atlantic Treaty Organisation allies have committed to spend at least 2% of their gross domestic product on defence.

While not all Member States have reached this target yet, the trajectory over the past years is going in that direction. The White Paper for European Defence — Readiness 2030 ⁽¹⁾ recognises this positive trend and notes a growth in the defence spending by Member States of more than 31% since 2021, reaching 1.9% of the EU's combined gross domestic product in 2024. But this is not enough, in particular to compensate for decades of underinvestment in defence.

In view of the growing geopolitical challenges EU faces, its security depends on this overall increase of defence spending and defence investments, as well as Member States closely coordinating and working together.

The Commission therefore offers support to all Member States in this endeavour, including by offering the possibility to Member States to use the national escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact ⁽²⁾ for additional expenditure in defence up to EUR 650 billion, in a framed and coordinated manner.

Finally, the Security Action for Europe Regulation adopted by Member States on 27 May 2025 ⁽³⁾ will provide Member States with loans up to EUR 150 billion.

Its recital (8) acknowledges that '... there is a growing need to accelerate, in a spirit of solidarity, the provision of Union support to those Member States that are likely to be threatened by serious difficulties due to the massive public investments needed, which may have an impact on their economic situation and that ..., such solidarity is especially essential for those Member States which are most exposed to military threats'.

¹ White Paper for European Defence — Readiness 2030, ReArm Europe Plan, draft SAFE regulation, draft EDIP regulation.

⁽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.

⁽²⁾ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a57304ce-1a98-4a2c-aed5-36485884f1a0_en?filename=Communication-on-the-national-escape-clause.pdf.

⁽³⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202501106.