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Answer given by Mr Kubilius
on behalf of the European Commission
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The White Paper on European Defence Readiness 2030¹ qualifies the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ('United Kingdom') as an essential European ally with which cooperation on security and defence should be enhanced in mutual interest.

The EU-United Kingdom Security and Defence Partnership² outlines that the EU and the United Kingdom share the same challenging security environment and have vital interests in the peace, security and stability of Europe and beyond and provides a framework to facilitate regular high-level dialogue and strategic consultations, joint initiatives, and possibilities for participation in specific EU defence initiatives.

EU defence related programmes already provide for limited participation of third countries under strict eligibility conditions aimed at protecting the security and defence interests of the EU and its Member States. This also applies to the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument³: the United Kingdom – like other third countries having concluded a Security and Defence Partnership with the EU – can participate in common procurements as buyer. Industrial participation (as supplier) is however conditional on the signature of a specific bilateral agreement between the EU and the third country in question, defining the rules and conditions of participation of the third-country entities, including additional safeguards to the EU and Member States' security and defence interests.

Regarding Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), decisions on the involvement of third countries are taken by the Council on a case-by-case basis acting by unanimity. Security and Defence Partnerships with third countries are fully in line with this policy.

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://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2025/EU-UK%20Security%20and%20Defence%20Partnership.pdf>.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2025/1106/oj/eng>.