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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(29.7.2026)

In the current volatile geopolitical environment, strengthening the EU's crisis preparedness has become essential. The discussions on Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)¹ are part of the EU's broader reflection on the future of EU security and defence. The Treaty is clear: the implementation of the mutual assistance clause is entirely the prerogative of EU Member States. Ongoing reflections focus on clarifying how Member States may invoke it, the necessary coordination and the possible support from EU institutions, if requested by the affected Member State.

For the 23 Member States that are also NATO allies, NATO remains the cornerstone of collective defence. Article 42(7) of the TEU itself explicitly recognises this reality, stating that it shall not prejudice the specific security and defence policies of certain Member States, including those linked to neutrality or NATO obligations.

Ongoing work will by no means replace the deterrence and defence guarantees provided by NATO, nor should it be interpreted as weakening its role or undermining the significance of the provisions of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty². On the contrary, discussions on the implementation of Article 42(7) of the TEU are being conducted in coordination with NATO, with the aim of ensuring coherence, complementarity and mutual reinforcement between the two frameworks, including through clear and coherent strategic communication.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2008:115:FULL>.

² <https://www.nato.int/en/about-us/official-texts-and-resources/official-texts/1949/04/04/the-north-atlantic-treaty>.