

## MEPs set out guidance for flagship European defence projects of common interest

**On Tuesday, MEPs on the Committee and Security and Defence put forward their recommendations to close critical EU defence capability gaps.**

In a new report, [Security and Defence MEPs](#) highlight that EU member states face serious and persistent defence capability gaps — particularly in air and missile defence, artillery, missiles and ammunition, drones and counter-drone systems, strategic enablers (including in relation to space and critical infrastructure), military mobility, cyber, artificial intelligence, electronic warfare, and ground and maritime combat. These gaps, they say, significantly weaken the EU's ability to deter threats and sustain large-scale, prolonged military operations amid growing risks of hybrid and conventional warfare. MEPs say these critical capability shortfalls need to be addressed, including through enhanced European cooperation on strategic and industrial matters, coordinated planning, and targeted investment to ensure defence readiness, while recognising the efforts already made by stakeholders within the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB).

The text was adopted by 30 votes in favour, 3 against with 4 abstentions.

### **Gradual and managed transition towards greater European strategic autonomy**

Despite increased defence spending, the report notes that European security remains heavily dependent on the defence industry of non-EU countries. The text stresses the need for a gradual and managed transition towards greater European strategic autonomy, including reducing the reliance on non-EU suppliers where EU alternatives exist or can be developed. Strengthening the EDTIB is seen as essential, through EU-focused defence procurement, cross-border industrial cooperation, open and competitive markets for EU companies, and better market access for SMEs.

To address current challenges, the text supports the development of autonomous strategic enablers and of a safe and secure common architecture for command, control, communications, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance, as well as common defence capabilities in the areas of space, strategic airlift and sealift, air-to-air refuelling and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) risk prevention. MEPs also praise the role of the European Defence Agency (EDA) in coordinating capability development.

### **Clearer objectives, timelines and financing needed for European Readiness Flagships**

MEPs call on participating EU member states to swiftly launch European Readiness Flagships under the Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030. On Commission's proposal for Flagships - the European Drone Defence Initiative, the Eastern Flank Watch, the Air Defence Shield and Defence Space Shield — they urge the adoption of clearer objectives, governance, timelines and financing. These flagship projects are presented as key tools to close capability gaps, strengthen the EDTIB, align national efforts with EU and NATO priorities, and advance towards a genuine European Defence Union.

### Quote

“New technologies have dramatically changed warfare. New strategies are shifting progressively towards unmanned tech power systems, such drones and AI-enabled weapons. Those evolutions are largely a byproduct of Strategic Enablers, the tools needed to facilitate common capabilities, joint military operations, a new architecture for command and control, communications and intelligence. Those are the basis for a new common defence and deterrence for a long-lasting peace for states and their citizens”, said rapporteur [Lucia Annunziata](#) (S&D, Italy).

### Next steps

The report will now be tabled for a vote in the European Parliament as a whole.

### Further information

[Procedure file](#)

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### Contacts

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