

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

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RESOLUTION AND REPORT

on

A European Single Market for Defence and Civil Preparedness

Rapporteurs:

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RESOLUTION**on****A European Single Market for Defence and Civil Preparedness**

The Consultative Committee of the European Economic Area (EEA CC):

- Having regard to the report “Much more than a market” by Enrico Letta, which highlights the defence industry as a crucial factor in ensuring a robust security approach for Europe and calls for a Common Market for the defence industry;¹
- Noting the 2024 European Parliament study on “Improving the quality of European defence spending: cost of non-Europe”, which estimates that the cost of not leveraging European economies of scale ranges from EUR 18 billion to EUR 57 billion per year;²
- Acknowledging the EU’s “White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030”, which outlines a strategy for a European Defence Union, including the creation of an EU-wide market for defence equipment;³
- Having regard to the EU Defence Readiness Omnibus, which aims to simplify legal and administrative frameworks relevant to defence readiness;⁴
- Noting the Regulation setting up the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument – the new EU financial instrument to ensure defence readiness;⁵
- Noting the 2026 Commission work programme, which outlines a series of actions for a more sovereign and independent Europe, including a “Mini” Omnibus on simplifying defence and sensitive security procurement, a Qualitative Military Edge Programme, and a Communication on the Defence Single Market;⁶

¹ Enrico Letta, [Much more than a market](#), April 2024, p. 70.

² European Parliament Research Service (EPRS), [Improving the quality of European defence spending: cost of non-Europe](#), November 2024.

³ European Commission, [White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030](#), March 2025.

⁴ European Commission, [Defence Readiness Omnibus - Defence Industry and Space](#), June 2025.

⁵ [Council Regulation \(EU\) 2025/1106](#) of 27 May 2025 establishing the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) through the Reinforcement of the European Defence Industry Instrument.

⁶ European Commission, 2026 Commission work programme and annexes, 21 October 2025, [2026 Commission work programme and annexes - European Commission](#).

- Having regard to the report by Sauli Niinistö, which emphasises the need for an ambitious new approach to Europe’s civil and military preparedness and readiness;⁷
- Acknowledging the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on defence funding in the EU, which underlines the urgent need to address the evolving security landscape in Europe through robust and unified defence funding mechanisms,⁷ as well as the EESC Opinions on crises and crisis phenomena in modern Europe and civil society⁸, and on the European Preparedness Union Strategy.⁹
- Noting the EEA EFTA Comments on the next EU programming period¹⁰ and on the “Buy European” criteria in public procurement;¹¹
- Noting the Opinion of the EEA EFTA Forum on the EU Preparedness Union Strategy;¹²

Whereas:

- Europe has, in recent years, faced a challenging geopolitical and security environment, including Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, cyber and hybrid threats such as drone incursions into European airspace, and rising protectionism and trade uncertainties;
- Europe needs a sufficiently strong European defence posture to credibly deter its adversaries and respond to any aggression
- Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, in her recent State of the Union speech, emphasised that “this must be Europe’s moment of independence” to take responsibility for its own defence and security;¹³
- There is an urgency to increase Europe’s defence industrial capacity to boost production, close capability gaps and strengthen supply chains;

⁷ EESC, [Defence funding in the EU](#), February 2025.

⁸ EESC, [Crises and crisis phenomena in modern Europe and civil society](#), March 2025

⁹ EESC, [European Preparedness Union Strategy](#), September 2025

¹⁰ [EEA EFTA States seek to help shape next EU programmes based on equal access](#), EEA EFTA Comment, January 2025.

¹¹ [“Buy European” criteria in public procurement should include all 30 EEA States](#), EEA EFTA Comment, June 2025.

¹² EEA EFTA Forum, [Opinion on the EU Preparedness Union Strategy](#), June 2025.

¹³ Commission President von der Leyen, [State of the Union Address](#), September 2025.

- The next long-term budget of the EU is designed to help build a European Defence Union, and the defence and space window of the European Competitiveness Fund will be allocated five times more funding at EU level than in the previous Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The EU is planning to apply a “dual-use” approach to a range of its programmes in the next MFF, including in the next EU Framework Programme;
- The threats facing Europe extend beyond the borders of the European Union and require close cooperation with like-minded partner countries, especially in the immediate geographical neighbourhood;
- The EEA Agreement has, for over 30 years, served as a robust and dynamic framework for the partnership between the EU and its closest like-minded partners: the EEA EFTA States – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. It has ensured equal rights and obligations, as well as a level playing field, for citizens and economic operators across its 30 Member States;
- As defence, security, and preparedness aspects gain cross-sectoral importance in European policy, the equal and comprehensive inclusion of EEA EFTA States in this regard is essential to safeguarding the integrity of the Single Market
- The Foreign Ministers of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, along with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, issued a Joint Statement in May 2025 emphasising their shared commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and expressing their determination to deepen EEA foreign and security policy coordination;¹⁴
- As part of its efforts to establish a single market for the defence industry, the EU is increasingly adopting legislation that touches both on defence and on the Internal Market;
- It has become increasingly urgent to respond to and prepare for current and future crises, and to foster a culture of resilience and preparedness through engagement at all levels of society;

¹⁴ [Strengthening EEA Foreign and Security Policy Cooperation](#), Joint Statement, May 2025.

- Civilian and military preparedness are closely interlinked. In the event of a violent conflict in any of the EEA country, the military response will be heavily dependent on civilian support;
- The EEA EFTA States possess valuable experience and expertise in civil protection and crisis preparedness, which can be shared with EU Member States, and vice versa. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM) has been incorporated into Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement;
- The EEA EFTA States , notably Iceland and Norway, are key contributors to Arctic stability and security by fostering dynamic, resilient economic communities and ensuring robust civilian and military preparedness.
- The EEA and Norway Grants were established as a part of the EEA Agreement and are funded by Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. The grants are open to applications in 15 EU countries, primarily in Eastern and Central Europe, and contribute to the reduction of social and economic disparities in Europe, thereby strengthening fundamental European values such as democracy, tolerance and the rule of law. These values are essential for building resilient societies able to build and maintain the level of preparedness that Europe needs.

Has adopted the following Resolution, by which it:

1. Highlights the urgent need in Europe to overcome the current fragmentation of national defence markets by establishing a single market for defence products, services and industrial cooperation;
2. Underlines that the EEA Agreement extends the Single Market of the European Union to the three EEA EFTA States – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – and that defence initiatives within the scope of the Single Market must include these States;
3. Urges the EEA EFTA States and the EU to jointly face the increasingly hostile international environment, by building partnership on security, defence and civil preparedness. This is also in line with their Joint Statement of May 2025 on deepened EEA foreign and security policy coordination. Points out that the participation of the EEA EFTA States in relevant initiatives under the EU market for defence equipment will contribute to ensuring economies of scale and strengthening the value chains necessary for European strategic development in the coming decades;
4. Welcomes the fact that the SAFE Regulation allows for the participation of the EEA EFTA States in common procurement and procurement from their defence industries. The EEA CC encourages those EEA EFTA States that wish to do so to proactively make use of this opportunity;
5. Echoes the request of the EEA EFTA States that “European preference criteria” in public procurement must encompass all 30 EEA States. This should include the field of defence procurement;
6. Stresses the need for long-term contracts in defence procurement to stimulate private-sector investment by providing the financial stability and predictability required for large-scale, high-tech projects;
7. Notes the increase in defence spending in the next MFF and the fact that a range of EU programmes now include a civilian/military component (dual use). The EEA CC shares the concern of the EEA EFTA States that upcoming programmes may contain provisions limiting the scope of this participation. It underlines that the EEA Agreement constitutes the legal basis for the participation of the EEA EFTA States in

all parts of EU programmes, and calls for full access to strategic discussions on future programmes;

8. Stresses that small and medium-sized enterprises play a vital role in the defence sector, providing expertise in niche areas, driving innovation and forming an essential part of the defence supply chain;
 9. Emphasises the valuable experience gained by the EEA EFTA States in civil protection, including through their participation in the EUCPM, and recommends their inclusion in efforts to build a culture of resilience across Europe;
 10. Welcomes the comprehensive whole-of-society approach outlined in the Niinistö report, stressing that social partners and civil society, with their knowledge of ground realities, can play a crucial role in ensuring civil preparedness at all societal levels, and should hence be considered as close partners;
 11. Concludes that a threat to Europe's security endangers the well-being and social security of its citizens, as instability and conflict can disrupt essential services, infrastructure and economic stability. Ensuring strong security measures and comprehensive preparedness is crucial to protecting the social fabric, safety and livelihoods of all Europeans.
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REPORT
on
A European Single Market for Defence and Civil Preparedness

1. A rapidly changing and increasingly volatile security environment

- 1.1. In recent years, Europe’s security environment has become increasingly volatile and complex. The ongoing war in Ukraine has significantly reshaped regional stability, while hybrid threats such as cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and unconventional warfare continue to undermine security. Additionally, drone incursions into European airspace and other emerging technologies pose new challenges, requiring rapid adaptation and strengthened cooperation.
- 1.2. This evolving security landscape exists alongside profound shifts in the global order, as long-standing allies reassess and change their strategic priorities. Reliance on the US security umbrella is diminishing, as Europe recognises the need to strengthen its own defence and strategic autonomy.

2. The EU’s Single Market for Defence

- 2.1. In the context of this changing security environment, Commission President von der Leyen emphasised in her State of the Union speech in September 2025 that “this must be Europe’s moment of independence”; that it is the Union’s mission to take responsibility for its own defence and security.¹⁵
- 2.2. The basis for this mission was laid out in the EU’s “White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030”, which underlined that Europe faced a fundamental choice about its future: It could either muddle through, attempting to adapt to new challenges, or “decide its own future, free from coercion and aggression, ensuring that the people of Europe are able to live in security, peace, democracy and prosperity”. The White Paper suggested concrete options for collaboration among Member States to urgently replenish their stocks of ammunition, weapons and military equipment in the short term. It also pointed

¹⁵ Commission President von der Leyen, [State of the Union Address](#), September 2025.

to critical capacity areas and proposed that Member States pool their capabilities and strengthen Europe's defence technological and industrial base in the medium and long term.¹⁶

- 2.3. The EU has since published a series of legislative proposals in the field of defence, include its SAFE Regulation, which entered into force on 29 May 2025. The regulation aims to bolster the EU's defence readiness by financing urgent and large-scale investments in the European defence industry and addressing capability gaps.¹⁷
- 2.4. On 16 July 2025, the Commission presented its proposal for an "ambitious and dynamic" Multiannual Financial Framework,¹⁸ of which one of the key goals is to help build a European Defence Union that can "defend itself, stay connected, and act fast whenever needed". The defence and space window of the European Competitiveness Fund will also allocate five times more funding to support investment in defence, security and space than the previous MFF. The EU is planning to apply a "dual-use" approach across a range of its programmes in the next MFF, including in the next EU Framework Programme.
- 2.5. Europe's security challenges were also considered one of the major strategic pillars for the next decade in the Letta report "Much more than a market", which maintained that Europe's industrial capacity in the field of security and defence must undergo a "a radical transformation", given that most of the EU's defence spending went to non-EU suppliers. The development of a "Common Market for the Security and Defence Industry" was, in Letta's opinion, crucial to "entrust the EU with the necessary means to tackle current and future security challenges".¹⁹

¹⁶ European Commission, [White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030](#), March 2025.

¹⁷ Council of the EU, [SAFE: Council adopts €150 billion boost for joint procurement on European security and defence](#), press release, May 2025.

¹⁸ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/multiannual-financial-framework_en.

¹⁹ Enrico Letta, [Much more than a market](#), April 2024, pp. 13-14.

3. The EU's civil preparedness approach

3.1. In March 2025, the EU launched its Union Preparedness Strategy, with the goal of supporting its Member States and enhancing Europe's capability to prevent and respond to emerging threats. Like the EU's efforts in the field of defence, the strategy was developed against the backdrop of an increasingly uncertain geopolitical and security environment, in which emergency crises and hybrid threats have risen significantly in importance. The COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, and the growing threat of environmental degradation have shown that Europe has to respond with "unprecedented speed and determination".²⁰

3.2. In the strategy, the EU puts forward:

- an integrated all-hazards approach, focusing on preparing for and responding to all types of hazard, rather than addressing them separately;
- a whole-of-society approach, involving all sectors, organisations and individuals;
- a whole-of-government approach, according to which government agencies and departments coordinate and collaborate to address hazards more effectively.

4. The role of social partners and civil society

4.1. Social partners have an inherent interest in peaceful societies; in a stable and predictable business and work environment, where both business interests and workers' rights are safeguarded. A strong social dialogue contributes to societal resilience and to fostering trust, cooperation and mutual understanding among all societal actors.

²⁰ Joint Communication on the European Preparedness Union Strategy, March 2025, p. 1. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025JC0130>

- 4.2. With their knowledge of ground realities, social partners and civil society can make a crucial contribution to ensuring a whole-of-society approach to civil preparedness. In particular, they can play a role in:
- providing policy advice and bringing the unique perspectives of the workforce and businesses into the preparedness framework;
 - disseminating critical information and providing training to workers, helping them develop the skills needed to prevent crises and to respond to them effectively;
 - supporting efforts to raise public awareness about risks, and promoting a culture of preparedness;
 - promoting public–private cooperation – a critical pillar of the EU’s preparedness, ensuring that resources, expertise and innovation from all sectors are used efficiently;²¹
 - strengthening the general population’s trust in preparedness efforts through anchoring in workplaces.

5. The role of the EEA EFTA States in Europe’s defence and civil preparedness

In the field of defence

- 5.1. For more than 30 years, the EEA Agreement has been the bedrock of the close and special partnership between the EEA EFTA States and the EU. In addition to extending the EU’s Internal Market to the EEA EFTA States, the Agreement bolsters the shared values and principles of democracy, the commitment to an international rules-based order, individual freedoms, the rule of law and fundamental rights. This has been demonstrated in particular by the close cooperation between the EEA EFTA States and the EU in their reaction to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.²²

²¹ Joint Communication on the European Preparedness Union Strategy, March 2025, p. 11.

²² Council of the EU, [Joint statement of the parties to the European Economic Area Agreement on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of its entry into force](#), May 2024.

- 5.2. In a Joint Statement of 21 May 2025, the EU and the EEA EFTA States declared that “amid a challenging geopolitical landscape, and most notably in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine, it is imperative to strengthen [their] foreign and security policy engagement”. They decided to strengthen their cooperation in the areas of peace, security and defence, notably through political dialogue at different levels, through alignment on foreign policy, and through cooperation between EU special representatives and envoys and their EEA EFTA counterparts.²³ Therefore, while the EEA Agreement does not cover defence as such, it has provided the basis for deepened political cooperation in foreign and security policy.
- 5.3. Another aspect of the EEA EFTA States’ role in EU defence policy is that EU defence legislation increasingly includes elements of relevance to the Internal Market, in which the EEA EFTA States participate fully. This is the case for instance in the Commission proposal for a European Defence Industry Programme.²⁴
- 5.4. Lastly in the field of defence, the EU has, with its SAFE Regulation, opened up “a new chapter in EU cooperation with trusted third countries”, allowing the three EEA EFTA States and Ukraine to participate on equal terms to the EU Member States from the outset. This includes eligibility for joint procurement and procurement from their defence industries.²⁵
- 5.5. In the field of civil preparedness
- 5.6. The EEA EFTA States bring valuable experience in the field of civil preparedness. In the Nordic region in particular there are many examples of civil preparedness initiatives, with contributions from public authorities at the level of state,

²³ [Strengthening EEA Foreign and Security Policy Cooperation](#), Joint Statement, May 2025.

²⁴ European Commission, [Proposal for a Regulation establishing the European Defence Industry Programme](#), March 2024.

²⁵ European Commission, [SAFE | Security Action for Europe - Defence Industry and Space](#), May 2025.

region and municipality, as well as private businesses and civil society organisations.²⁶

- 5.7. In January 2025, the Norwegian Government published a White Paper setting the direction for efforts to strengthen civilian resilience and total preparedness, including measures affecting the public sector, business sector and other sectors of society, as well as individuals. It underlined that Norway has a society in which people trust both each other and the authorities, and where the business sector, social partners and public authorities are used to working together. The White Paper recommends that these different sectors collaborate to ensure that resources are brought together when a crisis occurs. In particular, society's resilience depends on there being a diverse business sector throughout the country, as the private sector owns, operates and develops critical infrastructure, and plays a crucial role in both the capability to ensure the continuity of critical societal functions and to provide civilian support to military operations.²⁷

²⁶ See for instance the storymap produced as part of the [Robust Regional Preparedness](#) project, which explores how regional policies in the Nordic countries can enhance civil preparedness and resilience during crises, [Robust regional civil preparedness in the Nordic Region - Nordregio](#)

²⁷ Government of Norway, [White paper on total preparedness: Prepared for crisis and war](#), January 2025.