Edoardo Bortoli

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AGILE will boost EU sovereignty without funding lethal autonomous weapons

Today, the European Parliament adopted the new EU funding programme AGILE for innovative defence technologies. The programme is designed to help Europe support innovative start-ups and SMEs quickly and with less bureaucracy. Thanks to Greens/EFA initiatives, lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) are excluded from the programme.

AGILE will allow EU start-ups to access funding more quickly and with simpler procedures. Reporting requirements have also been streamlined. A new key element is the inclusion of Ukrainian innovation companies, allowing Europe to benefit from Ukraine's strong innovation capacity.

MEP Reinier van Lanschot (Volt), Greens/EFA negotiator in the Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE), comments:

"Europe must be able to defend itself independently. To do that, we need to innovate faster, increase our security of supply, and eliminate unnecessary red tape. That will make Europe safer. This investment program makes that possible."

MEP Sergey Lagodinsky, Greens/EFA negotiator in the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and Vice-President of the Greens/EFA Group, comments:

"AGILE is itself an innovation. Innovation cycles in defence are becoming shorter and shorter. Europe must be able to support ideas from start-ups and SMEs quickly and without drowning them in bureaucracy. That is exactly what AGILE is designed to do.

"My Greens/EFA Group pushed to ensure that Ukrainian innovation companies are included in the programme. Europe can only benefit from Ukraine's practical experience and innovation capacity. This will strengthen not only our security, but also our technological sovereignty in artificial intelligence, quantum computing and other key technologies. It will help Europe reduce its dependencies on the United States and regain its innovative edge.

"But speed must not come at the expense of our values. EU funding must serve Europe's security interests and must not reach companies from Russia or China through the back door. We need clear rules for the use of new technologies and effective human control. That is why it is right and necessary that AGILE excludes

lethal autonomous weapons systems. This is in line with the EU framework that Greens have helped build since 2020. Technology and international law are still evolving, but this framework is already one of the clearest normative anchors in the world."

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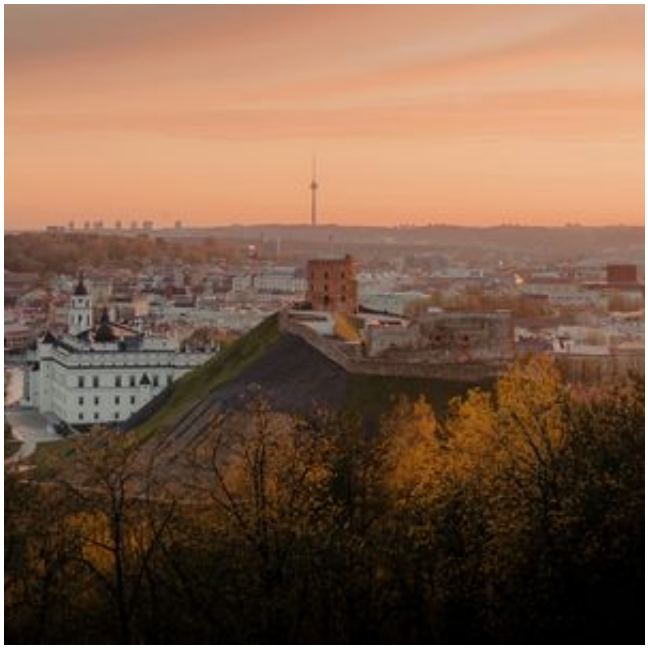

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