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Defence Omnibus must mark step towards true solidarity & shared responsibility

Tomorrow, the European Commission will present the Fifth Omnibus on Defence, aiming at strengthening European defence capabilities by reducing bureaucracy. Greens/EFA MEPs have long advocated for new rules for the military sector, which would create a genuinely European defence market and allow more effective support for Ukraine in its resistance against Russian aggression. However, increased defence efforts must not come at the expense of social and environmental standards.

MEP Mārtiņš Staķis from Latvia, Greens/EFA coordinator in the Committee for Security and Defence (SEDE), comments:

"Bureaucracy must not stand in the way of our security. We need faster, more flexible procedures that allow Member States to act together more effectively - to buy jointly, to move military equipment more quickly across borders, and to build more efficient and standardised defence systems.

"Simplifying access to the European Defence Fund and cutting the time companies wait for payments is long overdue. We must also ensure that investments in defence support local industry, not just large multinational firms. Europe can and should set the right conditions to make that happen.

"It's time to remove not only bureaucratic and legal barriers, but also financial ones. Banks must stop treating the defence sector as off-limits. If we let outdated rules hold back our defence, we're putting ourselves at risk. This package isn't just about cutting red tape - it's about showing that Europe takes the threat seriously."

MEP Hannah Neumann from Germany, Greens/EFA coordinator in the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET), comments:

"It's good that this debate is finally starting – we need a more efficient European defence industry to meet today's challenges. The Defence Omnibus can be a real step forward: easing cross-certification, translating NATO standards into EU rules, and simplifying joint procurements. That's what it takes to build a true internal market for defence and to strengthen genuine European security.

"But if we go down that road, we need to make sure we're not trading one priority for another. Streamlining is important, but not at the expense of sustainability, transparency, or democratic control.

“We also have to tackle some tough questions like joint arms exports and windfall profits. If we’re putting more taxpayer money into defence, it has to lead to more security – not just more profits for shareholders. Either we find ways with the defense industry to handle public funds responsibly or we need new rules. It is high time we finally have an honest debate about this.”

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