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Press release | 16.02.2022

Strengthening cooperation at European level

European security and defence

Yesterday, the European Commission presented a defence package aimed at increasing cooperation on defence capacities and boosting European technological sovereignty.
The Greens/EFA Group welcomes this initiative in the context of the "Strategic Compass" that will be adopted next month.

Alviina ALAMETSÄ MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence comments:

"We welcome the Commission's initiatives to strengthen the European Security and Defence Policy."

We welcome the fact that, for the first time, the Commission acknowledges that it has a role to play in arms exports and the effort to enhance harmonisation of national policies. The Commission should go further to prevent EU countries from selling arms to countries with a history of human rights violations. The Commission needs to come out with binding EU regulation, that is still missing from the framework of European defence cooperation.

"We must make the EU a more credible actor on security and defence. Substantial improvements in cooperation are now essential, whether it is in mutual European programmes, the adaptation of the European Defence Fund or the transparency of arms and military equipment exports.

"We also need to determine the missions that the Member States want to carry out jointly. We expect the High Representative to provide clearer guidance for future military operations and civilian missions under the Strategic Compass. The EU has to follow its values for peace both inside and beyond our borders. For this, we have to develop the means to intervene in and prevent conflicts. We must also be consistent in our demands and actions for peace: Invest enough in civilian missions and peace building, and also tackle our own issues in unethical practises in the arms trade."

More:
The Greens/EFA welcome the defence package plan to encourage Member States to jointly acquire military equipment developed through EU programmes and, in particular, to adjust the European Defence Fund to encourage this type of acquisition. We call for this process to be accompanied by adequate

parliamentary control and a substantial deepening of European cooperation through fully operational military headquarters at EU level, the establishment of a permanent multinational military force and secure supply of military technology and equipment. See here our proposed draft EU regulation on arms exports.

The European Parliament will adopt its annual report on security and defence policy (CSDP) this week. The Greens/EFA group considers the report to be lacking in ambition on both military and civilian cooperation and believe the optimisation of military expenditure and the European budget require major coordination on defence and the development of military capabilities. They also advocate the strengthening of civilian CSDP, the role of women and youth, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Finally, the Greens-EFA condemn the instrumentalisation of migration in this report, which seeks to weaponise migration control and classify it as a military security threat.

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