

# News from the Brussels' Bubble



NBB #2025-5, 15 Sept. 2025

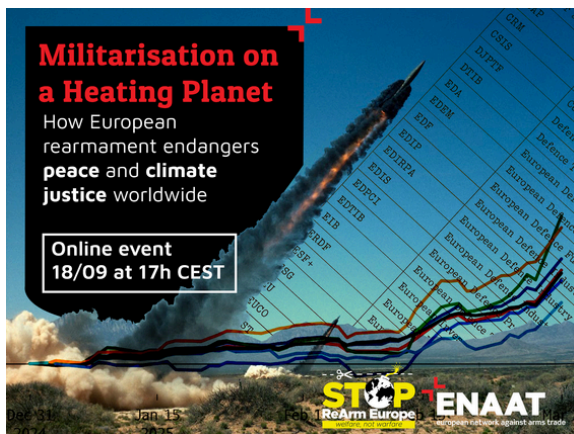
## EU agenda

*Unless indicated otherwise, EU official meetings take place in Brussels*

- 15/09/25 • Council Working Party on Defence Industry
- 2/10/25 • European Political Community, Copenhagen
- 6/10/25 • Foreign Affairs Council on Defence
- 14/10/25 • [5th European Defence & security Conference](#)
- 20/10/25 • [European Defence Industry Conference](#), Copenhagen
- 20/10/25 • Foreign Affairs Council, Luxembourg
- 23-24/10/25 • European Council
- 10/11/25 • Foreign Affairs Council
- 28/11/25 • Foreign Affairs Council on Defence
- 15/12/25 • Foreign Affairs Council
- 18-19/12/25 • European Council
- 01/01/26 • Cyprus Presidency of the EU starts

## ENAAT & members' activities

- Join our online event on European militarisation and climate, Thu 18/09 at 5pm CEST



As part of the [Global Week of Action for Peace and Climate Justice](#), we organise an online panel on the consequences of EU militarisation for EU policies that contribute to peace and climate justice.

Experts from ENAAT, the European Environmental Bureau, The Observatory of Mutinationals and Nonviolent Peaceforce will discuss with you what redirecting money to militarisation and arms production means for the green transition, for the fight against climate crisis, and for peace and solidarity with the global south.

[Read more about the event and register here](#)

- "Our protection must not be sold for profit": ENAAT joins 470 organisations to denounce EU deregulation wave**

On 9 Sept. 2025, "civil society, trade unions, and public interest groups delivered a clear message to Commission President von der Leyen, the European Commissioners, and EU Member States in a [statement signed by 470 organisations](#). They denounce the deregulation campaign that takes centre stage in the European Commission's strategy for this term."

ENAAT joined the 470 organisations as this will ultimately affect peace, not least because of a similar deregulation process being now initiated specifically in favour of the armament sector.

Read the [press release here](#), and the full statement is available in [English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Spanish](#) and [Dutch](#)

## EU funding for the arms industry

- **SAFE's €150 billion loans: useless EP complaint and access to non-EU firms**

The European Parliament finally decided to [go ahead and bring the case](#) in front of the European Court of Justice, contesting the 'urgency' article 122 (TFEU) used by the European Commission to by-pass the European chamber (see [NBB 2025-3](#)). But "In its request to the Court, the Parliament asked to maintain the effects of the regulation until a replacement is adopted." In other words, the complaint will make no difference and by the time the Court makes its decision the loans will be granted for long. At best, the EP will merely rubber-stamp a de facto situation.

A [first indicative breakdown of the loans](#) shows the EC would allocate two-thirds of the loans to five countries (Poland, Romania, France, Hungary & Italy). Agreements should be signed in the first quarter of 2026, and "payments will follow immediately" according to Commissioner Kubilius. So not "as early as December" as Ursula von der Leyen [claimed few weeks before](#). Member states must send [their spending plan](#) before November 30.

Non-EU firms can already ["tap into Brussel's €150 billion defence plan"](#) in a direct and indirect way, depending on the type of subcontract in place with the EU-based company they are linked to. [Discussions have been advancing over summer](#) regarding access to SAFE for the UK and Canada, but are now [delayed by French demands](#) to limit foreigners to 50% of the products' value. [Japan and Australia](#) are also potentially in line, while [South Korea and Turkey are also applying](#) although the latter is facing [strong opposition from Greece and Cyprus](#).

- **Negotiators aim for final agreement on EDIP by early October**

EP rapporteurs and the Danish presidency [already met several times for "technical talks"](#) on EDIP after the summer break. One of the main sticking points, i.e. [the mapping and monitoring of supply chains](#) on which Member States were reluctant to give more power to the EC, [seems to have been resolved, but others remain under discussions](#) like who can access the funding, the military sales mechanism and SEAPs or possible retro-activity. A first political trilogue (including the Commission) is planned for 22 September and the Danish presidency hopes to reach a final deal by October 7 & 8, with a possible parliamentary vote as early as the end of October.

"The EC is nevertheless planning a very first meeting with EU countries on Tuesday [16/09] to discuss the future work programme of the EDIP" [further reports Euractiv](#).

- **No Israeli suspension from Horizon Europe, Rafael may (not?) lose EU funds**

The EU [proposed on 28 July first sanctions against Israel](#), in particular suspending its participation in the EU research programme Horizon Europe. If "about 10 member countries – including France, Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium – support the move, with some even pushing for tougher actions like suspending trade benefits or targeting goods from occupied territories" ([Euractiv](#)) there was no majority for such suspension as "Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic rejected the suspension [while] few countries, including Germany, said [...] they need more time to study the details." ([euobserver](#)). Even the option to exclude the Israeli arms company Rafael from an Horizon project ["after posting a PR clip on X in which its drone, the Spike Firefly, killed a man in Gaza"](#) seems now unlikely as the ["EU misled the public"](#) on ethics scrutiny of the case, according to EUobserver.

Internal resistance about EU complacency towards Israel is growing however, with EU staff "protestors accusing the Commission of violating its "moral and legal obligations." ([Politico](#)). And "some 209 former EU and member state ambassadors and senior officials signed an [open letter calling for EU action](#) over Israel's war in Gaza ahead of the foreign ministers' meeting in Copenhagen" [reports Politico](#). 46 MEPs from 15 EU countries wrote an Opinion late July stating that ["Silence and inactions amount to complicity"](#).

Major European labour unions representing 45 million workers also [wrote a letter to Kaja Kallas](#) "call[ing] for the bloc to suspend the association agreement with Israel over human rights violations" further [reports Politico](#).

However, the EC president State of the Union Speech on Wednesday 10/09 was [revealing that only limited measures will be taken](#), and largely depending on the Member States' agreement. While Ursula von der Leyen could not avoid anymore mentioning the dramatic situation in the Palestinian enclave, she carefully avoided mentioning Israel at all, and therefore any responsible parties apart from far-right ministers and violent settlers, in sharp contrast with the multiple explicit references to the Russian threat and Putin, and the preparation of a 19th package of sanctions.

- **Related links**

[New UK minister touts defense industry as Britain's growth engine](#), DefenseNews, 10/09/25

[The controversial Georgian mine fueling Europe's new industrial arms race](#), Politico, 05/09/25

[France and Germany doomed to stay in unhappy fighter jet marriage](#), Euractiv, 20/08/2025

[Europe builds for war as arms factories expand at triple speed](#), Financial Times, 12/08/2025

[Palantir is well on its way to conquering Europe](#), Euractiv, 08/08/2025

[Meloni presses Leonardo, Fincantieri on spending EU defense cash](#), DefenseNews, 07/08/2025

## Other aspects of European militarisation

- **EU ready to war by 2030? Roadmap and European Defence Semester, drone wall**

EU defence chief Andrius Kubilius [had told Euractiv](#) late July that “he’s making a checklist to prepare Europe for a possible war by 2030, which he plans to have ready to present to EU leaders by October”, hoping also to start a discussion about the creation of a “European Defence Union”.

This was confirmed during the [State of the Union speech](#) delivered by Ursula von der Leyen on 10 September, in which she announced the presentation of a “clear roadmap for getting new common defense projects off the ground [and] clear goals for 2030. And for creating a European Defence Semester.” Although no details were provided, this could be similar to the European Economic Semester, i.e. an annual planning and coordination cycle where Member States would discuss their defence budgets, capability development plans and procurement strategies.

The other major announcement was the plan for an ‘Eastern Flank Watch’, a so-called “drone wall” that would stretch from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, as drones become [“Brussels’ new priority on defence.”](#)

- **Informal EU defence council: support to the Ukrainian arms industry**

On August 28 and 29 EU27 defence ministers gathered for an informal meeting in Copenhagen to discuss ways to “close the most urgent capability gaps, and mostly, to do it jointly, to do it together. And to be more effective”, as mentioned in the [press release](#). No decisions were made, but part of the talks addressed support to the Ukrainian arms industry, both through investments in Ukraine and helping Ukraine to open production lines in Europe, like the [recent agreement between Ukraine and Denmark](#).

Ministers also “discussed the ways to ensure [EU military] missions better support European Union geopolitical interests.”

- **Defence omnibus: exports rules evaluation & cohesion funds opened to arms industry**

The Commission [is currently evaluating](#) the review of the Defence Transfers Directive, which regulates intra-EU transfers of defence related products. Public feedback is possible till 29 September, although the EC has already largely consulted the arms industry in previous months. The EC evaluation report is expected by end of the year.

The topic was discussed at the [EU Council Antici Group on September 5](#), an informal group of high-ranking diplomats from Member States preparing the ground for the more formal EU27 ambassadors’ level meetings (COREPER) on the most important political files.

Germany and France [strongly defend](#) weapons export decisions to be “exclusively” in the hands of national governments. The Commission, on the other side, wishes to loosen export rules between member states, as seen during the [last Defence Readiness Omnibus](#) in March, allowing an easier and quicker trade of weapons within the EU.

On Wednesday 10, [MEPs voted overwhelmingly](#) in favour of using EU Cohesion funds to boost the arms industry (see [NBB 2025-3](#)). “Ambassadors of the EU 27 member states already gave their initial green light [last July](#) to [open](#) the EU’s €392 billion envelope to defence-related projects.”

The EC just opened a [public consultation on a ‘Proposal for a Regulation on Military Mobility’](#), open for feedback until 9 October. See the ‘Call for evidence document’ on the webpage for more details

- **“EU defence spending hits €343 bln in 2024, EDA data shows”**

The European Defence Agency has [published its annual Defence Data report for 2024-2025](#), detailing defence spending from all 27 EU Member States. In 2024, the EU27 defence expenditure reached an unprecedented €343 billion — a 19% rise on 2023 — bringing spending to 1.9% of GDP. The increase is “largely driven by record levels of equipment procurement”, [but a large part of it is coming from the US...](#)

- **EU-Japan Security & Defence Partnership includes industrial dialogue**

On President of the European Council, António Costa, President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen and Prime Minister of Japan, Shigeru Ishiba, met in Tokyo on 23 July 2025 for the 30th summit between the European Union and Japan. What is forthcoming is the implementation of the Japan-EU Security and Defence Partnership, [signed in January](#), with particular mention to maritime security. Costa stressed that “security and defence are now at the core of the EU’s global engagement. Europe’s security is interlinked to the security in the Indo-Pacific”. Japan is in fact the first country outside Europe to conclude the EU Security and Defence Partnership. [According to](#) von der Layen, next year will be launched the first EU-Japan Defence Industrial Dialogue. A [Politico analysis](#) suggests that the EU chiefs in Tokyo “may even find a new ally for the bloc’s critical raw materials strategy”.

- **Related links**

[The controversial Georgian mine fueling Europe’s new industrial arms race](#), Politico, 05/09/25

[Brussels wakes up to long-overlooked military mobility challenge](#), Euractiv, 03/09/2025

[Europeans demand more EU unity on bloc’s defence and economy](#), euboserver, 03/09/25

[Europe’s hidden arsenal: Why the Western Balkans matter more than we think](#), Euractiv, 28/08/25

[EU to increase US arms purchases as part of Washington-Brussels trade deal](#), euobserver, 22/08/25

[Defence not exempt from Trump tariff pain](#), Euractiv, 21/08/25

[Austria is torn over age-old question of neutrality and NATO](#), DefenseNews, 31/07/25

[Spanish defence firm backs Belgium joining FCAS fighter project despite French qualms](#), Euractiv, 29/07/25

[Trump’s EU arms sales boast doesn’t add up](#), Politico, 28/07/25

## EU Peace Facility and other news

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- **Ukraine: EU countries (still) resist reimbursing US weapons with EPF**

During the Copenhagen informal meeting of EU Defence ministers, the idea of using funds from EPF (€17 billion) to purchase weapons from the US to replace donations given to Ukraine did not gather the needed support. NATO secretary Mark Rutte supported this scheme to please Donald Trump and the US arms industry, grabbing to the logic of moving equipment fast from the EU to Ukraine, while “the US would be backfilling them because speed is of the essence”, [Rutte explained](#). EU-funded money pot would have reimbursed those countries sending their [expensive](#) Patriot air defence systems such as the Netherlands, Sweden, and Germany. Hungary opposed the idea, but many other countries were sceptical about the “hefty price tag” of about €2 billion of military equipment being bought (again) from the US. “France, especially, is not in favour of seeing its money supporting US manufacturers” ([Euractiv](#)).

- **Djibouti Armed Forces to receive €10 million from EPF, further €15 million to Albania**

Being in a geographical hotspot of global and European trade routes, [Djibouti will soon be a recipient](#) of the European Peace Facility, to strengthen maritime security in the Red Sea and enhance the Djiboutian Navy’s operational readiness. On July 25, the [Council adopted](#) the second bilateral assistance measure under the EPF of €15 million in favour of the Albanian Armed Forces, that will receive light armoured multipurpose vehicles, as well as tactical and engineering vehicles, bringing the total amount of support to Albania to €28 million to date. The measure is said to “enhance Albania’s potential to contribute to the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)”.

- **Related links**

[Limited options may force Europe to pay US for security in Ukraine](#), Defensenews, 22/08/25

[European military-industrial output for Ukraine outpaces the US](#), DefenseNews, 13/08/2025

[Ukraine uncovers major corruption scheme in defense procurement](#), Politico, 03/08/25