

**“Boosting military mobility and
moving towards a genuine EU
defence union”**



The EPP has been leading the development of EU security and defence cooperation for decades. The EPP has consistently called for adequate funding and a stronger and smarter cooperation with EU defence policy. We see that to deal with the threats and challenges that Europe is facing, the EU and its Member States must step up their defence capabilities and take steps towards a genuine Defence Union.

Against this background, we see that the EU must urgently boost its ongoing efforts in the field of military mobility. Military mobility seeks to facilitate the movement of military personnel and equipment in Europe by improving Europe’s traffic infrastructure and harmonizing national legal frameworks on cross-border military movements. It has become the flagship project of EU-NATO cooperation and attracted the participation of key third-country partners (i.e., the US, the UK, Canada, and Norway).

Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine has highlighted the need to take additional steps to boost the EU’s military mobility efforts. In addition to the Member States’ political willingness and capabilities, Europe’s ability to provide support and assistance to Ukraine depends also on countries’ ability to move that assistance across the continent. Effective military mobility is therefore crucial for the EU’s ability to act in a crisis, and for the credibility of NATO’s ability to deter an armed attack against its members.

The EU’s military mobility efforts are currently hampered by insufficient funding. There is a budget of EUR 1.5 billion (in 2018 prices) for military mobility projects under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) in the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). However, this is more than 70% less than what the European Commission originally proposed in 2018. It simply is not enough to deal with Europe’s current military mobility needs in the changed security climate that Russia’s war against Ukraine has created since February 2022.

We recall that, in their March 2022 Versailles Declaration, EU heads of state and government stated that the Union needs to prepare for fast-emerging challenges inter alia by ‘accelerating ongoing efforts to enhance military mobility throughout the EU’. The European Commission’s May 2022 Joint Communication on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward noted that the heavy demand for military mobility co-funding demonstrates ‘the need for and the capacity to use a larger budget’. Thus, in 2023, the Commission would consider strengthening the existing budget for military mobility in the context of the broader mid-term review of the 2021-2027 MFF.

We urge the Commission to propose, and the Council to agree to, a substantial increase to the existing military mobility budget through the CEF. We see that the budget ceiling of military mobility should be increased at least to the level that the Commission proposed in 2018, i.e., to EUR 5.767 billion (in 2018 prices). We also call on the EU to invite Ukraine to participate in the PESCO project military mobility as a third country. Furthermore, we underline the importance of simplifying procedures for evaluation of the CEF Military Mobility project applications so as to save valuable time.

We also call on the European Council to invoke Article 42(2) TEU to establish a ‘common defence’ at the EU level. This common defence should include the creation, in accordance with the TEU and in particular Article 41, of an ambitiously funded EU defence budget to finance all existing and future EU defence initiatives and also the creation of needed EU institutions where appropriate. This would simplify the existing funding of EU defence cooperation, strengthen the Union’s ability to support Ukraine and other key partners, and increase the EU’s security and that of its citizens.

The time to transform the EU into a genuine Defence Union is now.

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If you have any question you would like to ask please contact us.