

**EPP Summit Statement**  
**18 June 2026**

*As EPP, we strongly believe that the European Union must evolve into a stronger geopolitical actor if it is to effectively defend its interests, values, and security in an increasingly contested global environment. This requires moving towards greater political cohesion to advance common priorities in the areas of defence and enlargement, as well as being more assertive on the international stage against unfair market practices of third countries hindering its competitiveness.*

**Defence, Article 42(7) TEU**

Based on the outcome of our EPP Retreat in Zagreb in January 2026, the EPP is committed to taking further steps on the application of Article 42(7):

- NATO is the foundation of our defence and security, and we are ready for a stronger European role inside of NATO. But Europe must further increase its responsibility for its own security and defence to become sovereign. The operationalisation of Article 42(7) TEU entails enhanced coordination, more intelligence sharing and more agile military mobility. As the US is reducing military capabilities in Europe such as rapid deployable forces, European countries and the EU must compensate with their own tools, while respecting neutrality traditions.
- As EPP, we are convinced that such an application should be planned before crises emerge, through both political and military preparation. This should include the establishment of clear activation and consultation mechanisms among Member States, the creation of a toolbox of commitments that can be provided – including cyber defence support and airspace protection –, and the introduction of a framework for exercises, strategic communication and for scenario-based forward planning.
- We need a European Security Council involving also like-minded non-EU countries.
- In areas like drones and missile-defence, cybersecurity or space surveillance, we as EPP are convinced of the need for genuine European Projects, such as rapidly deployable reaction forces ready to respond immediately to emergencies.
- Building on the progress achieved in the Council on SAFE, EDIP, military mobility and the Defence Readiness Omnibus, we call for the continued strengthening of the Union's defence readiness.

- We as EPP stand for a European market for defence goods. We urge the Commission to present further initiatives on common standards, certification, transnational supply chains and common export rules. We strongly support the swift completion of the omnibus on defence.
- To achieve those goals and secure strategic autonomy, Europe must spend more on its own defence. We need a sustainable financing model for increased defence spending, where military expenditure will be exempted from the EU's fiscal rules. This would allow Member States to spend more on defence, while preserving fiscal credibility and favourable financial conditions.
- European integration and a comprehensive European security framework remain incomplete while part of Cyprus is under Turkish occupation. We reiterate the need to find a solution for the Cyprus issue in accordance with relevant UNSC resolutions and in line with EU law, values and principles.

The founding fathers of today's European Union started to unite us with the idea of an European defence structure. We will pursue the project of Adenauer, de Gasperi and Schuman with one key promise: Peace for Europe!

### **Enlargement**

Enlargement is a success story. We are determined to continue with the necessary steps. We welcome the new momentum after the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Montenegro and following the opening of the first clusters with Ukraine and Moldova. While acknowledging our commitment to a merit-based approach, we believe that the geopolitical approach is needed more than ever. In that regard, we stress the importance of integrating Ukraine's military capabilities as a key asset for Europe. As EPP, we welcome further initiatives to make EU policies such as free roaming a reality during negotiations, as people must feel the progress in their daily life. We also have to consider our EU internal reforms to prepare for a bigger EU.

### **China**

China is a partner, competitor and strategic rival. For us as EPP, the EU's trade deficit towards China is not acceptable. We stand for a true market-based cooperation and will not accept China's unfair market intervention, as well as its unfair currency practices. Reciprocity and a fair level-playing field are key principles in our relationship. We must stop naivety towards the long-term ambitions of China. We encourage the Commission to upgrade existing trade defence tools and to make use of the upcoming proposal on a Public Procurement Act to showcase our new strategy towards China.

We as EPP stand for a coordinated China-approach with our American partners.