

## **North East Flank business representatives' priorities regarding EU's preparedness, resilience and defence readiness**

**Ahead of the European Council meeting 26-27 June 2025, and in view of further working on the implementation of the Preparedness Union Strategy and bolstering European defence**

\*  
\*   \*

As EU leaders gather to address key priorities – ranging from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine to European defence and security and EU's role in the world – and the European Commission has recently published its Preparedness Union Strategy<sup>1</sup> and is working on bolstering European defence readiness by 2030<sup>2</sup>, the role of the private sector in supporting these efforts has never been more critical. Building on previous joint statements<sup>3</sup>, the North East Flank business representatives underline the importance of continued dialogue and the need to fully involve the business community in shaping Europe's preparedness, resilience and defence agenda. Only through close public-private cooperation and trusted partnerships can we ensure a resilient, competitive, and secure Europe.

We reiterate that effective public-private cooperation must be built on a foundation of trust, mutual benefit, and a shared understanding of risks. Moreover, a strong economy and a fully functioning Single Market remain the backbone of Europe's resilience and also the ability to ramp up defence production; integrating the private sector into preparedness and security efforts is not only practical – it is essential.

We welcome that the Preparedness Union Strategy proposes specific actions to foster both public-private cooperation and civil-military coordination. In particular, the following actions are areas where holistic and cross-cutting input from the wider business community is needed and can provide valuable contributions:

- The prompt establishment of a **public-private preparedness task force** is not only welcomed but essential for building an all-hazards approach to preparedness that encompasses the whole of society. It is crucial that this forum includes not only sector-specific operators but also adopts a cross-cutting perspective that reflects broader market dynamics and value networks. Such a platform should promote open and active dialogue, foster trust, and actively support the exchange of best practices and the joint development of practical guidelines. Moreover, the task force should establish a structured forum for information sharing between public authorities and companies particularly in strategic sectors and related segments within their supply chains, to ensure timely awareness of the evolving threat landscape. In addition, the action to organise a **Social Partners Preparedness Summit** is a welcomed initiative, reinforcing the importance of inclusive engagement.
- The development of **public-private emergency protocols** is a critical step, and the private sector – particularly in the North East Flank – has extensive experience and systems in place to support this effort. This expertise includes identifying vulnerabilities, assessing risks, and deploying technologies to mitigate disruptions across entire value networks, including in the field of cybersecurity. These proven approaches can provide a solid foundation for developing protocols and guidance applicable across Europe to strengthen preparedness and resilience. Such protocols should, from the outset, be voluntary in nature, with burdensome legislation avoided to ensure flexibility and broad industry engagement. A concrete proposal for emergency protocols includes developing public-private agreements, such as standby

---

<sup>1</sup> [EU Preparedness Union Strategy](#)

<sup>2</sup> [White Paper for European Defence – Readiness 2030](#)

<sup>3</sup> North East Flank business representatives' messages to EU leaders on defence, security and preparedness [24/6/2024](#) and [30/1/2025](#)

contracts, that would allow businesses to swiftly provide critical goods and services during crises, ensuring rapid deployment of resources when needed most.

- The establishment of a **European Centre of Expertise on Research Security** is a timely and important initiative. Given that a significant share of research and innovation (R&I) in Europe is conducted and funded by the private sector, businesses have substantial contributions to make – particularly as research security is already an inherent and explicit part of industrial R&I processes. Moreover, through R&I, the private sector drives advancements in defence and dual-use technologies as well as in emerging technologies such as AI, quantum computing and cloud infrastructure, playing a critical role in strengthening Europe’s overall security framework. Therefore, it is essential to actively engage and include the private sector in EU’s R&I and research security activities to ensure they are fit for purpose and needs-driven.
- The initiative to organise **regular exercises involving NATO**, particularly under the EU-NATO Parallel and Coordinated Exercises concept, is highly valuable. There is a clear need to strengthen NATO–industrial coordination by integrating the broader business community and entire value chains – not only the defence industry – into these efforts. This approach would help bridge the EU and NATO frameworks, aligning their respective core competencies with private sector capabilities. By involving a wider range of industries, this cooperation can support the development of more comprehensive resilience and preparedness strategies, reflecting a full “mine-to-mine” approach that integrates full supply chain security with a view to also boosting European defence production capacity. Joint training across organizational boundaries and across national borders would facilitate information sharing and shared understanding of the threat landscape. Since we are all interdependent on one another, joint exercises would help reveal the weak points in our interconnected processes that need improvement.
- There is also a need to **integrate supply chain security** into the EU’s preparedness initiatives. The EU Commission must address supply chain security by considering the critical role of infrastructure reliability, particularly in electricity supply. Ensuring that businesses can set requirements for infrastructure reliability or develop affordable backup solutions is essential. This guarantees operational continuity and enhances overall economic resilience during crises.

Looking ahead, we firmly believe that European businesses must be fully integrated into the EU’s preparedness and defence efforts to ensure they are effective and future-proof. Strengthening the Single Market, improving access to capital, advancing better regulation, simplifying existing rules, and maintaining fair competition and partnerships are essential steps. While we focus on building our long-term preparedness and resilience, we must also recognise that Europe’s first line of defence is currently in Ukraine. Continued and unwavering support for Ukraine is not only a moral imperative – it is in our strategic interest in securing a safe and stable Europe.

\*  
\*   \*

*Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic*  
*Confederation of Danish Industry*  
*Estonian Employers’ Confederation*  
*Confederation of Finnish Industries*  
*Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists*  
*Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise*  
*Polish Confederation Lewiatan*  
*Confederation of Swedish Enterprise*  
*Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise*

